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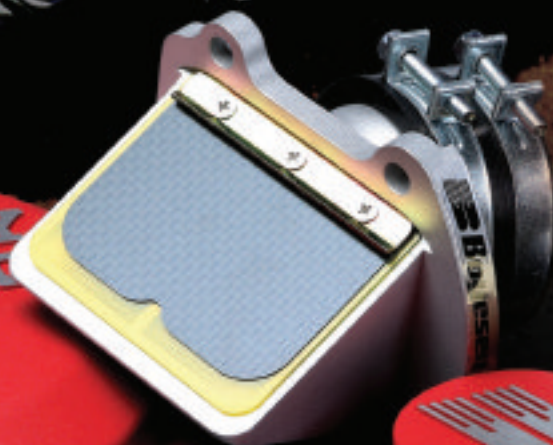


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© RED BULL CONTENT POOL

COMMENT

Believe it or not, the white bike on the left there – the one that Josh Hill is using to kick ass at Red Bull Straight Rhythm and is chucking out that huge rooster tail in the process – is actually running on elastic trickery, no, wait – electricity! And while there's been quite a buzz surrounding battery-powered toys for some time now it's actually getting to the point where everyone is starting to take some notice because these things are seriously potent and are getting the job done!

For those of you that missed it, Josh Hill raced the Alta electric bike against the 250Fs and did really, really well. So well, in fact that he made the third-place run-off – not bad for a guy who hasn't raced in a while going up against some of America's top Lites Class talent. Heck, he even beat Kyle Cunningham along the way and he's certainly no slouch on a dirt bike – without checking the history books I'm pretty sure that he's podiumed at an AMA National.

It makes me wonder if the e-bike actually offered Hill some kind of advantage. Obviously an electric motor will make huge amounts of torque from zero RPM but then there's the inertia effect from the electric motor to consider along with rotating mass, centre of gravity and all that jazz.

All added up would that create more or less stability than a bike powered by a four-stroke engine? And if so would it be a pig to turn and therefore only beneficial on an unwound supercross circuit? Answers on a postcard to the usual address please because I need to know...

While e-bikes were on my mind I also had an awesome idea that admittedly gets a little bit crazy towards the end but then again my best ones always do. The secret then is to rein them back in by about 50 per cent and so you end up with an absolute doozy! Anyhoo, picture this totally imaginery phone call to Arenacross head honcho Matt Bates.

Ring ring, ring ring, ring ring...

MB: "Hello?"

Me: "Hiya Matt – it's Suttly..."

MB: "Suttly, how're you doing?"

Me: "Absolutely awesome! I've just had an idea that is so damn great that you might wanna put

a helmet on so you don't make a mess when I blow your mind..."

MB: "Okay."

Me: "How about getting Alta to compete in the Arenacross tour. The bikes are obviously legit – as seen at Red Bull Straight Rhythm – and the length of AX races means they'll be able to keep enough charge to be competitive for the duration. Also, since the series is governed by the MCF there are no issues regarding rules and stuff as there would be in other international indoor race series."

MB: "Right."

Me: "If Alta are up for it then that potentially opens up a whole new line of sponsorship possibilities. I'm thinking the hype surrounding a battery-powered bike kicking ass in a high-impact series like Arenacross would be right up Duracell's street. Could you imagine how much mainstream exposure two e-bikes in Duracell branding could stir up?"

MB: "Okay."

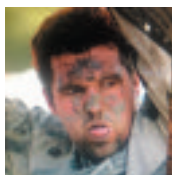
Me: "Also, if Duracell brought their bunny along as a promotional tool for their brand you could probably use that huge rabbit to really get the crowd going between races. Imagine the buzz a rampant rabbit of that size could potentially create – it's probably only measurable on the Richter scale."

MB: "Right..."

Me: "Think about it. And remember, it was all my idea – unless it all goes wrong at which point I wash my hands of any mess that the rampant rabbit has created..."

MB: [total silence]

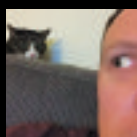
Me: "Hello?..."



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ANTHONY SUTTON

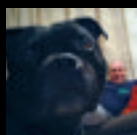
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TONY

CAIROLI



THE EIGHT-TIME WORLD CHAMP KNOCKS OUT ANOTHER COLUMN FROM AN AIRPORT LOUNGE . . .

Hi folks here I am again! This is my penultimate column of the year and as always I'm writing it in an airport lounge as I get ready to board a flight. This time it's to go to Milan for EICMA, the biggest motor bike show in the world.

Autumn always brings some nice things to do – like the shows, my party and some good rally races. A couple of weeks ago I was back in my home town of Patti – like every October – in order to meet family, friends and fans that I can't see during the year because of all the training and the races.

Coming back to Sicily is always very enjoyable and every time is special for me. I love the nice feeling that I have when I step out of the airplane, the air is incredible and immediately you can smell the sea and the flowers while Mount Etna dominates the view of the Catania gulf.

Even though it was the end of October the temperature was 26 degrees Celsius and beautiful sunshine was welcoming us there. This time there were less of us than usual and the atmosphere was even more charming and intimate than normal.

We got to spend some time with my family at a typical Sicilian dinner that never seemed to end! And to chat with some old friend at the Papilla, my favourite bar by the sea in Patti Marina. I love to meet my old pals and to play football with them so we played two games at night and we had a lot of fun with some good players like Rui Gonçalves and Glenn

Goldenhoff and a bunch of good local guys.

The TC222 Party obviously must include motorbikes and specifically enduro, so we, the boys, went on our traditional bike day with all the local riders up into the hills from where the view is incredible! While the boys played our girlfriends cruised around Sicily visiting some nice spots and taking advantage of a free day in the schedule. After six hours riding the trails with friends we were all ready to slide our legs under the table for a traditional meal with all the best traditional local food...heaven!

Since we were really lucky with the weather we took a little boat and went around the coast, finding the ideal spot to take a nice swim and have a picnic on the beach eating something that I can't resist – Arancini! These are rice balls stuffed with meat and in Patti they are the best in the world!

Last but not least October in Sicily also means the Rally of Patti and this year I was racing with a very well prepared car. Saturday afternoon I managed to take it for a shakedown, taking Rui and Glenn, one by one, for a quick and fun stage.

Unfortunately on Sunday it was raining all day and the asphalt was pretty wet and tricky so a little less fun than I had hoped it would be. Anyway I managed to win my class with a super-tuned 1600cc with more than 250 horsepower.

Back in Rome I got to ride a few times at home before heading to the UK for the Dirt Bike Show at Stoneleigh where I had a very warm welcome from my British fans. Afterwards

I took a little holiday with my sweetheart Jill in Abu Dhabi before preparing for EICMA where I will have some jobs to do with my sponsors and KTM.

I will be there to meet my fans and all the other athletes that like me are involved with the show. It's incredible to see how many people share the same passion of bikes and it's nice to see that our world is coming back strong after a few years of financial crisis.

After EICMA my 'car month' begins with two rally races in a row – the Bologna Motor Show, that after a little break returns to be one of the biggest shows in Italy for all motor addicts like us. The second one is the famous Monza Rally Show which one of my favourites.

It's a few years since I've raced in Monza alongside some of the best rally specialists and some of the 'other' passionate motorheads like Valentino Rossi. Last year I wasn't so lucky and just at the last lap of the last stage I had an issue with one tyre that cost me second place on the podium but then in the Super Final I won with my team-mate Matteo Romano.

Now it's time to board – it's the last call for Milan and I've got to go!

See you soon amici Britannici (British friends)!

A stylized red ink signature of Tony Cairoli, written in a cursive script.

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BRYAN

MACKENZIE



SCREW DONALD TRUMP — WE SAY VOTE B-MAC FOR PRESIDENT!

What about this motocross bubble we live in. It's a lifestyle which is safe and secure, gives direction and purpose and lends itself to a nice balance of respectful morals but promotes radness against the regime. I mean, we are savvy and polite enough to open doors for other people, respect parents and the hands that feed us and have an appreciation for the standard morals of life expected from us at birth – most of us anyway. Yet, we wear our hats backwards, swear like Aussies and when gathered in a herd, sick enough to walk the line but just not cross it, all for sh*t's and gigs.

Outside of the bubble just seems like hard work. Of course we all have to pop out once in a while but it's like the movie from the '90s with Arnie – Total Recall. They live in a bubble on Mars and every time they go out their head wants to explode if they breathe the air.

We have to do it though with work, the wife, school friends' weddings or that awkward small talk conversation with the guy waiting on the same thing you are somewhere public but all the while we're making money to ride, checking Instagram or slyly texting our buddies from MX and still keeping one foot inside the safety zone. We're out and in as quick as we can.

So what's my point? Politics. I don't know about the major life changing events that happen in my peripheral vision of life. A major event to me is a drugs test at a British Championship or the ACU banning tear-offs which didn't last long because of the backlash.

This year, however, has seen at least two major moments in history that may change the world we live in forever for the average man – Brexit, and President Trump. I couldn't tell you an informed thing about either of them. My hypothesis of politics was given to me by my best educated friend, Adam...

"Politics, can be summed up simply by one person making decisions that don't suit everyone," he reckons. "They do this for four years... After that, someone else has a go, who undoes everything the other one did... Thus getting you back to the original position. It's why humans have not really evolved mentally as a species. Apes organise themselves more effectively and diplomatically... They also finger their own burns and don't make a secret out of it." And that's how I'll think of it.

I don't know how either event will affect me, if it even does, as while most of the world would have been listening intently, researching and forming opinions and ideas on these globally impacting events, I was simply keeping on keeping on. When these topics were burning hot it was all just white noise to me. I could hear it, but, I wasn't really listening.

However, Roczen signing for Honda, France winning the MXoN and yet another guy being followed home from practising and his bike getting stolen... that stuff I know. That's platinum news to me.

There's so much worry and strife in the real world and I'm so busy with my own that I don't have the time to worry about it all. Other people

wrap themselves in these topics and get paid to do it so I'll leave the politics and bullsh*t to them as long as they leave the motocross and our lifestyle to us.

I'll happily continue to absorb what's relevant to my life and disregard what isn't because I've ticked along just fine with that philosophy for the past 31 years. But, guaranteed there's people reading this that will call me narrow minded and bash me for not taking a moral stand behind something one way or another. But I feel if we always worried so much about how everything outside of our bubble was going to affect inside of it, then you're already spoiling it.

Unless it's right in front of me I just find it hard to give it much of my attention. So for as long as I can afford the food in my belly and the fuel in my jerrycan, I hope that long may it continue that the biggest drama in my life is drawing the curtains on a morning to see if we can get the track open or not and go out to ride.

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STEVE

HOLCOMBE



SHOWS, TESTING AND THE START OF PRE-SEASON TRAINING — THERE'S NO REST FOR OUR STEVE . . .

I'm soon going to be headed to New Zealand, just as I did this time last year, for a kind of winter training holiday. I'm a big cycling fan and together with a few friends I decided to head to NZ last winter and had a great time. I was pretty sure it would be a cool thing to do – an awesome place with countless places to visit and things to do – but it turned out to be an even more amazing way to start the New Year that I'd hoped. It was six memorable and productive weeks, and ever since I got back in January I've been looking forward to returning.

Despite the fact that it's one hell of a long way to travel, heading to New Zealand is the perfect way of switching off from everything. Equally as important it also allows me to build my fitness levels up before things get serious back in Europe. Being summer in the Southern Hemisphere means the weather's great (I hope) and just about every day can be spent outdoors. Combining the great weather with the incredible scenery means that cycling's anything but a chore. Without really thinking about it my fitness improves. It's a win, win situation.

Despite clocking up a fair few mountain bike miles it'll be nice to be completely away from dirt bikes for a while. This year was pretty full-on at times and despite the fact that I've not

raced for a while I still haven't really had a break. I'm excited to get 2017 started but I know it's going to be a long, long season. I guess my time in New Zealand will be the calm before the storm. Once I'm back in Europe it's going to be all systems go in preparation for the opening round of the EnduroGP season. All being well I'll be back relaxed and ready to go.

It's amazing how quickly the weeks and months have passed since I won the Enduro 3 World Championship. It took a while for things to sink in properly but after a few weeks I was really able to take some time to reflect on the year I had. It was kind of crazy that I won my first world title before winning my first British title but the fact that I won both is still a pretty amazing thought.

Spending time at the Dirt Bike Show was really cool. I didn't wonder too far from the Beta stand but getting the chance to catch up with so many of the people that had wished me well during the year was special. I started to get sick of the sound of my own voice by the time my two days were up at Stoneleigh but chewing the fat with so many people made the time fly.

Not speaking much in the way of Italian meant that my time at EICMA – the Italian motorcycle show – was very different to the Dirt Bike Show. I spent plenty of time chatting with my team-mate Alex Salvini, my sponsors

and all the guys from Beta but it was more of a selfie fest as far as the public went. But five cool days nonetheless. Now that both shows are over it's back to testing, before packing my bags for New Zealand.

That opening round of the world championship is certainly something that's got people involved in the series talking. Taking place in Finland, it's going to be a winter enduro with a twist. No one really knows what to expect, and as such there's plenty of people who've got the knickers in a twist about it. It's an understatement to say that most I've spoken to aren't overly keen on a race in sub-zero temperatures, but it is what it is. It's going to need some very specific preparation, and it's going to be something none of the championship's 'top' riders have experienced before.

But before I start my cold weather preparations I'm off to sunny New Zealand... Catch ya next month.

Steve

Handwritten signature: Steve #70



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DANIEL

GROVE



MR SHINE GETS ALL SAFETY CONSCIOUS IN HIS LATEST MONTHLY UPDATE...

As you're all well aware, motocross is a pretty dangerous old game. Now I'm not going to try and put you off riding or racing in any way, shape, or form. In fact I'm gonna do my best to prolong your riding days as one day you'll have to hang up your helmet and that'll be a sad day regardless of your reason why.

So, firstly, look after you bike! I've no mechanical qualifications to my name but read on as I'd consider myself to be like most of you guys and gals in the fact that the only person that's going to work on our bikes to get them ready for the weekend, is ourselves. Some lucky folk out there have their dad, uncle, or man friend to take care of things and if this is you, also read on as you'll realise just how much work should go into preparing a bike.

I'm starting with the bike as a motocross-related injury that doesn't involve a bike is pretty rare. I've mostly been to practice tracks this year after a long old stint of years of racing and this is where I see a lot of bikes that aren't in such a good condition. I've seen all sorts this year including broken hubs, snapped chains, handlebars on the fuel tank – all of which come under the banner of preventative maintenance.

To keep a motocross, or enduro bike for that matter, in shape you don't really need any expensive tools. Obviously the more you spend the better quality tools you might get but for well under £100 you can get all the tools you'll need to keep your bike ready to ride. You could also replace a piston in a two-stroke using the same tools. I know this because I did it myself for 10 years straight!

The more you work on your bike the more you'll become familiar with what needs checking regularly and what doesn't and when you're on top of it all it takes less time to give your bike the once over between sessions/races and in the week.

I'm amazed by how few riders actually check their bike over between sessions. It seems like those that race or those with a racing background are on top of stuff but it seems like the weekend warriors amongst us may neglect their bikes a little more.

As for the running of the bike, if it doesn't start within three or four kicks (if you ride regularly) then something isn't quite right. If you have to bump start it then something really isn't right! And if you bump start it on a regular basis then I suggest you investigate as to why it won't kick over as if it struggles to start then it won't be running right and the most likely reason behind this is that the engine is in need of some serious work.

It could just be a spark plug but I've never had an issue with these, I used to replace them when I changed a piston on a 250 two-stroke which was at 20 hours.

It's worth keeping a diary of what you do to your bike just for future reference. I always have and still do with the long-term bikes that I've had this year and they're not even mine. But if an issue occurred I'd have something to fall back on as remembering everything gets a bit blurred after a season of riding. So if you have a bike like this and a new plug hasn't done the trick, now is the time to get the spanners out and tackle the problem or get it down to your local dealer for them to have a good look at it.

Any mechanic worth their salt will contact you before carrying out any major bank account damaging work and when it's complete you'll collect the bike with the old broken or worn out parts, along with any receipts or invoices for external work such as a cylinder replate. If this hasn't been happening to you then perhaps find someone else to work on your bike as if someone says that they have replaced the main bearings and the con rod for example, you'll never actually know they changed them unless you see the old ones will you?

Riding gear is another thing and to be fair I've not noticed anyone skimp on protection which is nice to see, although I have seen someone wearing tracksuit bottoms while riding although his bike and rest of his gear was pretty modern so I'll assume that he just forgot them. Or lost a bet.

Nowadays you can pick up some bargains at the Dirt Bike Show – which I'm sure many of you did – as

it really is the best place to get a deal and after walking around this year's show there was some mega savings to be made. Helmets and boots always seem to have an offer on which is handy as they are the two most important pieces of equipment that you should have in your gear bag, especially your helmet. And remember that it's called a helmet, not a lid – humans are not ice cream containers (speak for yourself Daniel – Suttly)...

Something else that's making motocross dangerous is track preparation. Give me a grassy track on a hillside any day of the week but an un-watered power harrowed track in the summer is getting on for being GBH! I've made the mistake of riding that sh*t once this year and that will be the last time I ever do it. It's not only awful to ride on but your body, bike, and your nice new helmet take a beating and if you have to race on this type of surface it really feels like the worst day of your life.

I was at a practice track when it happened so I missed a session so that the marbles were gone for my next one. I don't understand why track owners don't just leave the track baked if water is in short supply as that's how the track will turn out anyway, if people stick around that is to clear the dirt missiles off the track.

And at a couple of tracks this year the track was harrowed, including the take offs for the jumps but the very top of some of the take offs were left solid! I've always cruised round on the first lap or two of practice because you just don't know what might be in store and I suggest you do the same and also try to avoid the riders that don't do this.

And they wonder why they always get arm pump...

Daniel Grove



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JAKE

NICHOLLS

AFTER MONTHS OF EATING RIGHT, TRAINING AND RACING JAKE FINALLY GETS TO LET HIS HAIR DOWN...

It's cold, it's raining, it's November, it's allowed. Even so, it seems hard to accept how crappy the weather is at the minute as just over one week ago my friends and I were all riding around a private track in the sun, having BBQ and a few beers while wearing t-shirts. We got the most out of the summer I guess – BBQ and t-shirts in November isn't too bad!

On the subject of good weather, bloody hell Dubai was hot! It was a minimum of 34 degrees for the week which was okay, I guess. My days consisted of eating a massive breakfast then sitting by the pool, reading my book and getting in the pool every 20 minutes to cool off. Then it was happy hour from five until seven before I wobbled back to the room for a shower, then went out for more food and drink. For a whole week – superb!

As always, I was excited to get back to sunny Suffolk though. We got home at midnight on a Friday and I had already organised a bit of a ride day at one of our private local hotspots for the Saturday. The whole day consisted of two-strokes, BBQ, beer and rock music plus a couple of four-strokes.

It was mega to see all my mates really enjoying riding again. Seems like they – perhaps somewhat understandably – get caught up in the beer drinking through the summer months and lose the love a bit but days like this make them realise why we all do it. Men in a field having a laugh with scramblers. We ended up in a rum pub in town listening to an Iron Maiden tribute band and all felt a bit sorry for ourselves the next day.

Other than building and racing a new RC car, the next fun event was the following Saturday, where I organised a moped speedway race in my back garden. The build up was nearly as good as the actual event – there was some seriously

suspect purchases happening haha. I was on a Yamaha version of a Honda crunch that dad had located off an old boy from his local. It was one hell of a machine and actually survived the night only missing half the rear spokes from the back wheel after I had a slight mishap off track and shot back on track, across the centre green and fully Butron'd my mate Dave whose left leg was jammed in-between my backwheel and one of my rear shocks. Through beery eyes we all suspected we had a night ruiner on our hands but old Dave is made of tough stuff and he spluttered out that he was fine but get my bleedin' leg out of this wheel.

More carnage ensued through the night. It started with heats and semis as there were 16 of us but due to the rules complying that a can of Stella had to be drunk when the board turned to 5 after the semis and the interval the final never really happened and I seem to remember it being renamed the All Comers final.

I ended up wedged under my mates caravan that was lining the track a few times but when I was upright I had the sliding down mainly thanks to the steel shoe that I borrowed off a speedway rider zip-tied to the bottom of my Nike trainer. Fully regretted not wearing some sort of boots the next day the ol' shins looked like a bit of salami!

The serious stuff started the following Wednesday when Steve Payne from Multitek returned my Foxhill race bike to me with a shed load of maps to try. As per usual he has worked some magic on the old girl and it honestly twice the bike already so immediately I was excited for next year.

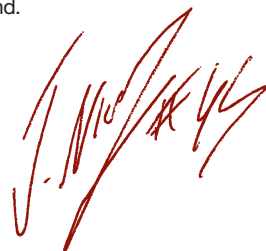
The next day I headed up to the Dirt Bike Show for the afternoon. I find those sort of events a bit awkward and I'd rather walk around there and blend in with the crowd for a look about, instead

of parading around in team gear trying to look interested. But it was okay, I caught up with my team-mate Ben Watson who has been out a while and was pumped he's back on a bike.

I also signed my contract with Roger for next year which was cool – I'm really happy with that. I hung about and the whole team went out for a meal up the road and it was nice to see everyone away from the racing environment. Since then I've been mountain-biking, two-stroking, naked two-stroking and stuff like that.

But a week or so ago I decided I wanted to race Paris-Lille supercross, formerly Bercy, of which I've watched a number of times as a kid and dreamt of racing. I had enough of every year saying to the missus while watching it on TV, 'one day I'd love to race this'. So Jamie Dobb sorted me out an entry for the SX2 class where I'll race the 250F Husky against the top French guys who are very experienced indoors.

I'm going in with an open mind, to have fun and gain some good experience. I would like to do the 450 class in the future. I've been out on the 250 a couple times now and it's so nice being back on one after a couple years. Especially on the tight SX tracks I have to practice on around here. I've been riding with MX suspension so I'm excited to get some stiffer SX stuff in to try it out ahead of the weekend.



NEWSHOUND



Marv Musquin beats team-mate Ryan Dungey to the 2016 Red Bull Straight Rhythm title

A STACK OF HOT NEWS, GOSSIP AND INNUENDO PLUS YOUR CHANCE TO WIN MAX ANSTIE'S SIGNED RACE KIT . . .

Unfortunately for the modern day inventor the wheel, telephone and Apple Mac are already invented so tech geeks are having to come up with new concepts to become immortal. In our world this means the electric bike.

Josh Hill ventured into uncharted territory when he entered a professional motocross event – Red Bull Straight Rhythm – on a battery-powered steed. The Alta Motors electric bike which he piloted surprisingly puts out a huge torque curve competitive with a fossil-fuel bike and reaches a peak horsepower of 40 making it relatively competitive against 250Fs. Aside from being a little underpowered, its downfall is its weight but on a course with no corners it didn't disgrace itself. Hill and the Electric bike went all the way to the B Final eventually finishing the event in fourth overall.

The world renowned redneck Ronnie Mac also took to the professional stage at Straight Rhythm. Lining up on his infamous custom FMF-powered CR250, Ronnie battled through qualification making it to the big show. But come crunch time, Ron-dog let 'Michael' Jordan (Smith) win the first of the bracket races stopping the two-stroke man's advancement in the show but not before taking a \$2m bribe from Red Bull to let their athlete, Smith, beat him – Ronnie's words, not mine.

Red Bull KTM factory racings Marvin Musquin showed he's grown into his big boy pants after his rookie season riding the 450 by being the big winner of the event beating his team-mate Ryan Dungey – the reigning SX champ – in a head-to-head. Marv visibly looked up for it and was evidently the most aggressive man on the rhythm lanes during each run demonstrating his development as a rider on the 450 after one season on the big girl. He should be a threat come Anaheim 1.

The inaugural Monster Energy SMX Riders & Manufacturers Cup went down as a huge success with industry folk. It's sad that it wasn't as well supported by attending fans but word has it that was mostly down to astronomical ticket prices. However, the entertainment was a resounding success. Ryan Dungey took the spoils in his first indoor race in Europe with a steady 2-3-2 performance taking home the winners pot. But it was MXGP riders that shared the race wins with Febvre, Gajser and Herlings each taking a scalp.

KTM won the first manufacturers cup trophy with relative ease courtesy of their riders Dungey, Musquin and Herlings, with Honda second and Kawasaki rounding out the podium.

Newly HRC-mounted Kenny Roczen impressed at this year's Monster Energy Cup as he debuted in red. Roczen was the fastest

rider all day but one small over-jump resulting in a gnarly get-off. Ken had been leading the second main event and it was the only mistake he made all day – some say it was a million dollar crash! K-Roc won the other two main events on the evening meaning he might have scooped the \$1m winner's bonus for winning all three main events which has only been done once before in six attempts.

Instead, Eli Tomac picked up the pieces and won on the night winning what is still the highest single payday in our off-road sport – \$100k. Tomac won't be filling his truck with red this month...

Interesting pub ammo fact that I don't think anyone knew – the AMA have a mechanic's appearance ruling stating that every mechanic must wear a collared shirt at all of their races!

Two-time British MX2 Champ Elliott Banks-Browne will lead a brand new MX1 team by the name of Geartec Husqvarna Motorcycles into 2017. Not only will EBB be the star rider for the new team but will also act as team manager in charge of his own fate, too.

Kristian Whatley has come back from the abyss to sign with MVR-D Husqvarna after disappearing halfway through the '16 season. KW had to take some time away from racing mid season for personal reason but is replacing Tanel Leok on the Chamberlain brothers' team



Ronnie Mac celebrates Donald Trump's election victory or something...



Mel Pocock and Revo mean business in 2017



for 2017. It's easy to forget – but don't – that Whatley was the most dominant man in British motocross in 2013. With the MVR-D boys behind him they have every chance of, as Donald Trump would say, 'making Kristian great again'.

Contrary to what I said last month Apico Husqvarna are going nowhere. I mistakenly made the assumption that the Husky team were ceasing for '17 because team owner Richard Clarke was stepping away from the sport in the UK but I was wrong. The reigns have in fact been passed over from Clarke to Apico Factory Racing owner Dylan Brown instead. Apico are going to run the team they have title-sponsored in-house and will be stepping up to MX1 with rejuvenated Cumbrian Jamie Law and long-term supported Apico guy, Matt Burrows, on their roster.

Mel Pocock is to lead a new Husqvarna team into British MX2 battle next year with new hotshot, Jamie Carpenter – the Maxxis MX2 champion – as his wingman. Pocock and Carpenter are spearheading Mark Yates' – the Revo dude – new race-team as Husky's officially supported MX2 outfit presumably picking up the budget vacated by Apico Husqvarna. Revo had sponsored Roger Magee's Irish-based Hitachi Revo Husqvarna

(formerly KTM) team – and are famous for making high performance maps for cars – but are now going 'all in' on their own again.

After nearly seven months off the bike, youngest of the Watson brother dynasty – that's Ben – finally got back on the horse in October after breaking his foot at the Argentine GP in March. Originally thought to be a relatively minor injury it turned out to be a whole bigger job than first thought and forced him onto the bench for the complete season!

I've heard two rumours about young Watson regarding next year – one being that he is following his brother's footsteps into Enduro and the other that he is returning with Roger Magee's team who are expected to be back onboard KTMs after a single season powered by Husqvarna.

Tommy Searle is this year's big fish caught by the glamorous Arenacross UK net. Kawasaki UK secured the signature of the British MX1 champ to contest the entire series through the bleak British winter for their Kawasaki Team Green pro team alongside AX regular, Jack Brunell. Tommy has been testing his indoor skillz this winter competing in the SMX Cup and at Bercy-Lille demonstrating his taste for indoor racing again. Tommy has the potential to win both >>



SHERCO SHOCKER!

ELECTRIC-START 125 SE-R ADDED TO THE ENDURO FAMILY...

French manufacturer Sherco have added a 125 SE-R to their enduro model range. Lifting the covers on the 125cc two-stroke enduro at the EICMA show in Milan, the bike looks like the real deal.

Biggest news is that it's electric-start only – there's no kickstart – and the motor features a six-speed gear box and has an electronically controlled exhaust power valve similar to the system used by TM Racing.

Suspension is 48mm WP front fork with 300mm travel while the WP rear shock has 330mm of travel.

With KTM, Husqvarna and TM Racing previously only offering enduro purpose 125 machinery, Sherco's offering will add further choice for customers.



GAS GAS RETURNS!

ALL-NEW EC300 BREAKS OUT

The Gas Gas brand continues its rise from the ashes with the news of their next generation EC250 and EC 300 two-stroke enduro models.

One year on from being saved from extinction by the Torrot Group, it's great news for die-hard Gasser fans to already see new models rolled out. Meeting their targets of selling 3,000 units in year one, Gas Gas have delivered on their promise of new bikes.

Branded "The Phoenix Project" they've totally reinvented their EC enduro model with a new frame, revised geometry, new engine and an endless list of components. The central backbone frame is completely redesigned meaning less torsional stiffness and lower weight distribution. The new frame and geometry sees the bike weigh in considerably lighter than its predecessor at 105kg.

The new engine features a new crankshaft, cylinder, cylinder head, FMF Powercore 2.1 exhaust silencer, new radiators, improved clutch lubrication. 48mm KYB front fork with Air/Oil separation and KYB rear shock take care of suspension.

Other points of note include fully redesigned swingarm, wishbone and rocker system, chain tensioner, NG Brake discs, larger air filters with rapid removal system, narrower fuel tank, narrower seat, Magura clutch cylinder and LED headlight.



THREEPEATER!

GRIMBO TAKES THIRD GETZENRODEO TITLE ON THE TROT...

Husqvarna's Graham Jarvis continued his reign of the German GetzenRodeo Extreme Enduro by claiming victory in this year's event. Held every two years, Jarvis has now won the race for the last three editions.

Making the event his own, Jarvis dominated the five-lap final having placed a comfortable third during the morning two-hour qualifier behind Alfredo Gomez (KTM) and Jonny Walker (KTM).

"The main event is what it's all about for me," told Jarvis. "I caught the guys pretty quickly and hit the front at the end of lap one and that was sort of it. I love this race, it suits me a lot, so to have won it for the last six years is awesome!"

Behind him it was Gomez who finished as runner-up with Mario Roman (Husqvarna) in third. Not having one of his better days at the office, Walker finished off the podium in fourth.



SPAIN KILLER!

GOMEZ TAMES INAUGURAL HIXPANIA HARD ENDURO...

KTM's Alfredo Gomez secured victory in the first edition of the Hixpania Hard Enduro in northern Spain. He was joined on the podium by Graham Jarvis and Mario Roman at the end of the three-day race.

With Hard Enduro travelling to Spain for the first time ever, it was Gomez who gave the Spanish crowd a home win. Following Friday's night race, Saturday's time trial, Sunday concluded with a multi-lap extreme loop.

Jarvis initially got his nose in front on lap one, but a damaged exhaust forced him to pit for repairs giving Gomez a clear lead. From there, Gomez hardly put a foot wrong as he rode to victory.

Eight minutes down, Jarvis charged his way back into contention, getting as high as second, he eventually had to concede defeat, only just, on the final lap. Roman completed the top three.



Team America celebrate winning the ISDE themselves and Donald Trump winning the presidential election



EEC winner
Brad Freeman



Jane Daniels clinches
the WEEC title

the indoor and outdoor title next season in the UK which would be something to be proud of – and he claims he's up for it, too.

You might remember that I mentioned about anti-doping tests at the final round of the Maxxis British Motocross Championships held at Foxhill last month. Five riders were selected for participation and I'm saddened to report that no one was pregnant but positively all the tests were clear. Shaun Simpson, Tommy Searle, Steven Clarke and Adam Sterry along with another randomly selected rider were all tested and found to be complying with regulations.

In 2017 the FIM Motocross World Championship will be huge! It has now grown to 20 rounds in 17 countries with Indonesia, Russia and San Marino being added to the tour and the return of old faithfuls like Portugal and Sweden. It's going to be a long, tiring year for the cream of the crop and staying injury free has got to be high on the

priority list for a top finish come the end of the season.

A major introduction to the MXGP series is the addition to metal mesh behind the starting gate at all rounds of the championship. Proposed as a fair way to give each rider an equal opportunity of a great start, the concept was trialled at the SMX and Monster Energy Cup with positive results. The new start pad will give consistent starting conditions in all weather conditions to all riders and cut out start pad preparation time for the riders.

I'm not surprised but excited about the return of Arnaud Tonus to MXGP. After a couple of failed years due to injury for Kawasaki's Pro Circuit team in the States, Tonus is coming back to the world championship as Shaun Simpson's teammate on the newly formed Wilvo Yamaha team. It'll mark the Swiss rider's first season on a 450 but he already showed great big bike form

Ken Roczen takes a trip over the bars and misses a million dollar payout from Monster

Arnaud Tonus has signed up for the longest GP season ever!

Tommy Searle is set to race seven Arenacross rounds, 20 GPs, eight Maxxis events as well as the MXoN in 2017 then he might get a weekend off before starting prepping himself for the 2018 season...

at the MXoN this year in Italy finishing second in the overall Open standings behind Herlings. He's just another dude throwing his hat in the ring in the super-competitive MXGP class.

America winning the International Six Days Enduro – it finally happened. Once almost as believable as, well, Donald Trump becoming President, Team USA have written their own piece of history by bringing home the bacon at the ISDE in Spain.

The quartet of Taylor Robert, Kailub Russell, Thad Duvall and Layne Michael signed off from the weeklong race in Navarra, Spain by proudly waving the Stars and Stripes flag from the top step of the podium. Delivering arguably their most determined and polished performance to date in enduro, USA grabbed control of the lead early on day one and never let go.

Ending the opening day of competition out front, they fended off challenges from Australia, Italy and Great Britain to get the job done. And it's probably safe to say, unlike that US election,

USA definitely deserved this winning result after many, many years of trying.

But that wasn't the only good news for USA as team leader Robert also went on to win the event outright. Solid as a rock, Robert's riding was on point for the entire week. Following on from his EnduroGP win, endurocross and extreme enduro success, Baja rides and even the odd backflip or two, Robert continues to prove himself as one of the most talented and all-round dudes on a dirt bike.

Of British interest and the ISDE was a resounding success with Team GB racing their way onto the podium in a terrific second overall. The lads raced their hearts out all week long with Danny and Jamie McCanney, Nathan Watson and Jamie Lewis thoroughly deserving this result too.

It's been a long time (honestly, we can't remember) since the last time Team GB made the top three in the ISDE World Trophy standings so surely this is a result well worth

celebrating. And the form looks good to improve for the future. Adding E3 World Champ Steve Holcombe into the fray and a potential win in 2018 is certainly on the cards. And that's something which hasn't happened since 1958.

Unfortunately the British Junior squad didn't have such favourable luck in the overall standings. Pushing for a top five result, they were dealt a blow when Lee Sealey dropped out of the running knocking them back to 14th overall.

Elsewhere and the enduro champions keep rolling in. Adding to the World champs from Steve Holcombe and Jack Edmondson, Brad Freeman has won the European Enduro Championship and Jane Daniels the Women's European Enduro Championship.

Ruling the roost at the final round of the series in the Netherlands, the duo claimed their respective titles in style with winning results.

Congrats guys and gals – you've made British Enduro great again!





WIN!WIN!WIN!WIN!WIN!WIN!

MAX ANSTIE'S SIGNED RACE KIT AND SMUGGLING DUDS UNDERWEAR UP FOR GRABS...

Factory Husky ace Max Anstie finished off his MX2 career with a solid fourth place in the world championship standings – just missing out on a second FIM bronze medal in his battle with Benoit Paturel – before he moves up to the MX1 division in 2017.

To celebrate him being the UK's #1 ranked rider we've hooked up with his underwear sponsor Smuggling Duds to offer each and every DBR reader the chance to win a signed set of Max's race kit along with several pairs of his favourite under crackers from their amazing range – check that out at www.smugglingduds.com.

To be in with a chance of winning this awesome prize simply answer this simple question. What is Max Anstie's chosen career race number?

Is it: A) 99

B) 69

C) 49

D) Wine and dine

If you think you know the answer then scribble it down on a piece of paper along with your name and address then send it to us at – Anstie Gear Comp, DBR Towers, 41 Northgate, White Lund Industrial Estate, Morecambe, LA3 3PA before the closing date of December 15. After that we'll stick all the correct entries into a box and randomly pick ourselves a winner.

SD
SMUGGLING
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As well as being the baddest dirt bike read on this planet there's an extra special reason to buy next month's Dirt Bike Rider as anyone and everyone who grabs a copy of our January issue – on sale December 16 just to confuse y'all – stands the chance of winning the ultimate Arenacross VIP package. It's so radtacular it'll blow your mind!

The prize includes two Platinum VIP tickets for a round of your choice – there are seven to choose from – and a swanky hotel room for the night. Heck, we'll even pick you and your chosen partner up from the hotel and take you straight to the arena in a limo. After that you'll get to enjoy the full Platinum VIP experience which basically includes –

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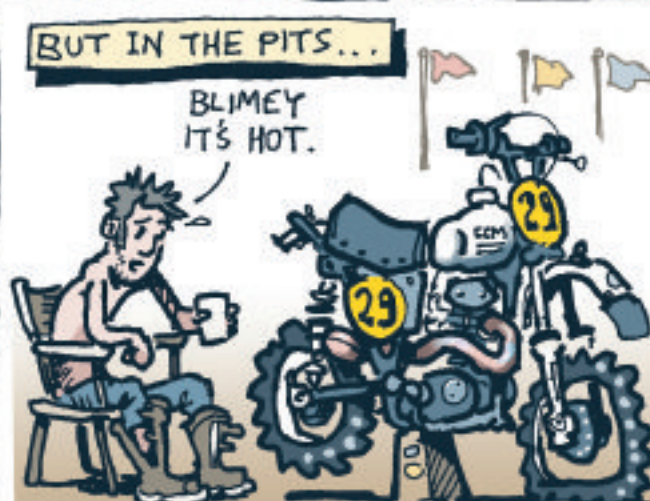
- Access to an exclusive VIP lounge prior to entering the main arena
- Drinks upon arrival
- A fully serviced bar
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- Free programme and event lanyard
- Privileged entrance to the arena prior to doors opening
- Back stage pit walk
- Exclusive track walk
- Meet the Pro AX and FMX riders
- Signed Arenacross merchandise

All in all it's a prize worth well over £600 which is gonna be well worth winning. So remember, remember the 16th of December or if you're a forgetful fecker like us maybe buy yourself a subscription – we'll even chuck in a free calendar to sweeten the deal – so you don't miss out on the opportunity to win this most amazing of Arenacross prize packages...

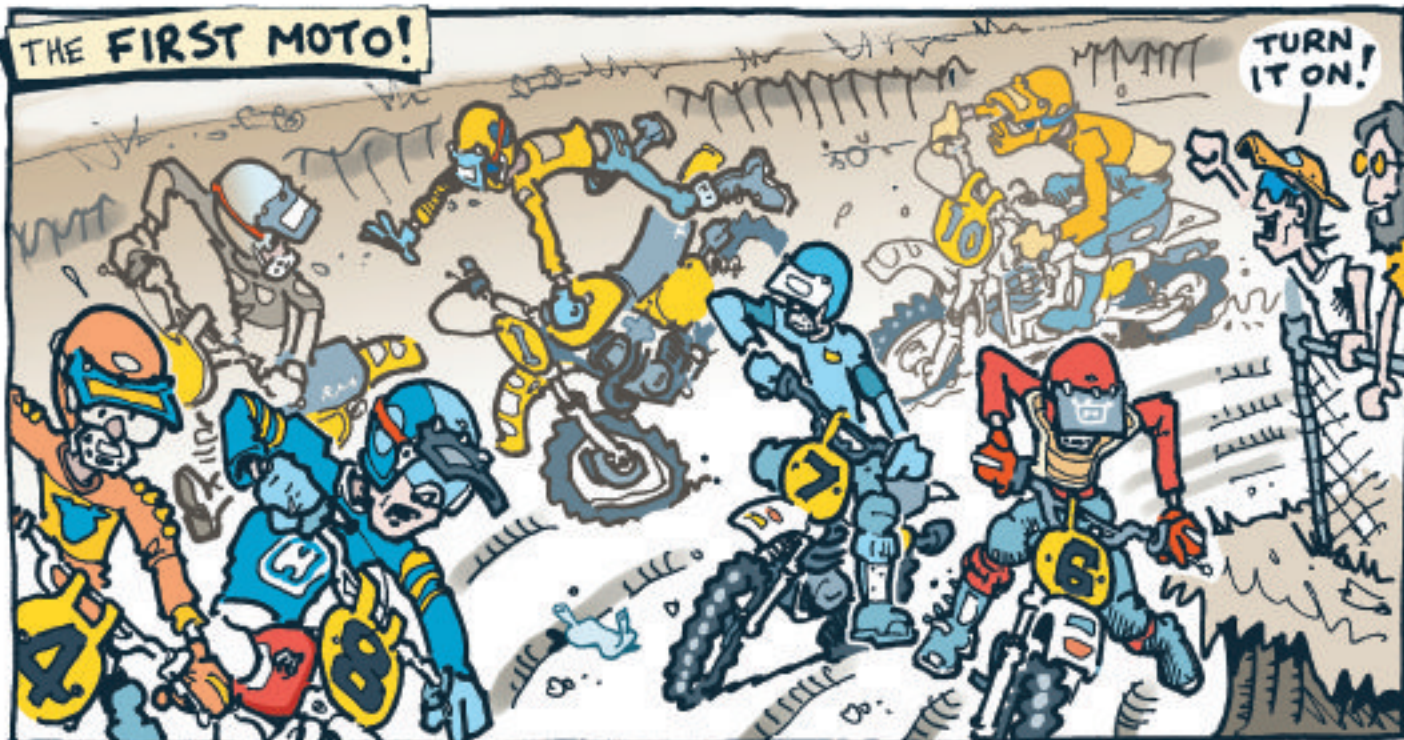


USGP 500cc CARLSBAD California USA

21



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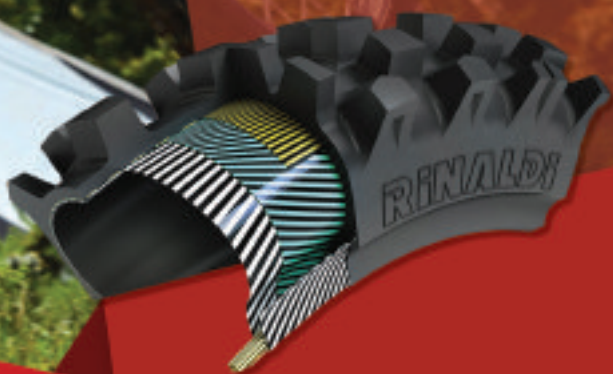
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Young

Guns!



Three reasons why the future of British motocross
is looking so damn bright . . .

Words by Sean Lawless Photos by Nuno Laranjeira



Young
Guns!

KNIGHT SHIFT

Moving up six places to fifth in the 2016 Maxxis MX2 series, Liam Knight is a hot tip for podium finishes next season . . .

With a leap of six places up the Maxxis British Motocross Championship MX2 table from 11th to fifth in 2016, it's Liam Knight who's leading the new wave of home-grown talent.

The 20-year-old from Liphook in Hampshire is still searching for those elusive race and overall podium finishes in the Maxxis but his amazing consistency – after a no-score in the opening moto of the season he failed to make a race top-10 just twice all year – rocketed him up the standings.

If he continues to progress then next year – his fifth season racing for the Dyer & Butler KTM team – could see him continue to climb the championship ladder and become a regular in the top three...

DBR: Congratulations on a great season Liam – from no points in the opening race at Lyng to breaking into the top five in the country is no mean achievement...

LK: "The first race of the year was my worst.

The first lap I got caught in a pile-up and then I came together with someone just as I got into the points and crashed again. After the first round I think I was 17th in the championship so I was very happy to keep climbing and finish fifth."

DBR: It was just your second year in the MX2 class but I guess we shouldn't be too surprised after you ended your debut season in 11th.

LK: "It was a lot higher than the goal was because I knew how tough the group would be after speaking to some of my friends who'd already moved up. My goal was to be inside the top 15 at the end of the year and be as close to the top 10 as I could at the last few rounds so I was really happy with that for my first year.

"The first round in 2015 I remember thinking I'd done the best lap I could possibly do in qualifying and I came in and was only 16th but in the races I was sixth and fourth and got fourth overall which, I think, is still

my best overall finish."

DBR: How hard did you find it to make the transition from MXY2 to MX2?

LK: "I did the last round of the British [in 2014] at FatCat. I didn't struggle with the length of the races – I never felt tired towards the end – but the intensity was so much higher. I think a lot of people expect coming out of MXY2 they'll just be up there straight away because they compare lap times but when you're in the race it's a lot different.

"The MX2 guys hold their pace and maybe drop off a second if that during the whole race whereas in MXY2 you can maybe do a lap that's close to MX2 but by the end off the race you're five seconds slower. It's about keeping that intensity for the whole race."

DBR: You finished your final year in MXY2 in third and came within 12 points of taking the title – looking at the points table you started slowly and came on strong at the end of the season...

>>



Knight gets on the gas at Lyng!

LK: "I had a bad first round at Lyng and then at Canada Heights for the second round someone crashed into me on a downhill jump and it broke the bike. If I hadn't had that DNF I would have liked to have been a lot closer to winning it all but it kinda ruined my chances."

DBR: How long have you been riding and racing?

LK: "I was about five when I first got a bike but I had a quad before then and my first race was just after my sixth birthday on a Husky auto. My dad used to race and then as I got a bit older he sold his bike and started taking me and my brother Daniel riding."

DBR: Judging by your progression in the pro ranks is it a safe assumption that you did well straight away?

LK: "I wasn't very good at all on autos and 65s – on an auto I don't think I even won any club races. When I moved up to a 65 I started doing the BYMX nationals but I don't think I was even inside the top 15 when I began doing them."

"On the small-wheels I was getting a bit better and I was inside the top 10 and my first-ever national win was in the big-wheels. I just slowly got better and better until I started winning races."

"The opening round of my last year in the big-wheels was my first national win at Brampton and I was leading the championship that year for about four

rounds and then I broke my arm with two rounds to go and ended up finishing third."

DBR: That must have been a massive disappointment...

LK: "I didn't even crash. I just got a jump wrong and when I landed my arm snapped. It wasn't like I made a massive mistake and crashed. I had led the championship for the first four rounds and I'd got quite a comfortable lead and wasn't pressured for the last two rounds so for me to go and break my arm wasn't ideal."

DBR: Did you go straight to a 250 as soon as you got the chance or did you do the whole 125cc stroker thing?

LK: "I did 125s for two years really. My first



*Unusually for a south coast rider
Liam excels in sandy going*



year I wasn't supported and did the British championships against the 250s and the next year – 2013 – was my first with Dyer & Butler. I rode a 250 for them in the British [MX2] championship and then I did some Europeans on my own on a 125."

DBR: A lot of people feel at least a season on a 125cc two-stroke is a valuable stepping stone for young riders. Do you think it's benefitted you not jumping on a 250 straight away?

LK: "I don't think I lost anything going on a 125 – if anything I think it was better for me because when I moved out of the big-wheels I was quite tall but I'm not a big build so I wasn't too heavy to ride a 125 and I don't think I was strong enough to ride

a 250. I would have been able to ride one but not well – it would have been more a year of crashing.

"When I was on the 125 I didn't get great starts but on the track I don't think I lost out. I was the only one of my year group to move up on a 125 – everyone else jumped to a 250. I always rode two-strokes – I'd never ridden a 150 – so we thought it would be best to get used to a big bike on a two-stroke and then the year after go onto a 250."

DBR: How did your deal with Dyer & Butler come about?

LK: "I didn't have a ride going into the year I first rode with them but Liam Garland did his knee again and was going to be out for

the whole season so they were looking for a local rider they could help. Dyer & Butler are 15 minutes away from my house so at the first round of the MX2 at FatCat I knew they were going to be watching me. We only had one race and I crashed on the first lap and came from last to seventh and they asked me to fill-in for the year."

DBR: There are not many riders who have stayed with the same team for so long so you're obviously in a good place...

LK: "They've helped me so much – the support from them has been so good for the last four years now. They know I'm trying as hard as I can whether the race goes right or wrong and they're right behind me so I'm really happy to be on the team."

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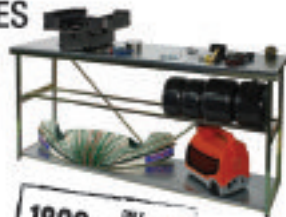
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Knight comes under attack from Lewis Tombs and James Cottrell at the Maxxis season finale

DBR: How much help has it been working with Steven Lenoir for the last two seasons?

LK: "Last year we kinda did our own thing but this year, because of the new suspension we've been using and Steve being the main tester for their suspension, he's been helping me. He's really good at setting up a bike and he's helped me a lot this year along with Matt [Hutchins] from Evo-Tech.

"Steve's got a really good feeling for the bike and is very knowledgeable with suspension while I don't quite understand everything. He's a big help – especially on race day if there's something I don't feel is quite right."

DBR: Are you a full-time pro?

LK: "I finished college in the middle of summer last year – I was doing furniture making – and then went to work for my dad's transport company."

DBR: That must put you at a disadvantage against your rivals who are full-time?

LK: "If I can get a Wednesday or Thursday off then I ride but for the rest of the week I work for my dad. It's easier for me to get a day off to go riding working for my dad – he's always there with me every weekend and he knows what it takes for the guys at the front to be doing what they're doing.

"A lot of the time I get up early in the morning and go to the gym and still work for my dad during the day. During the season I'll ride two days during the week a bit more often but I'll still go to work for dad the other days. The prize money is better at the Maxxis than anywhere else but I don't think I'd have that much money if that's all I relied on."

DBR: Some riders who work for a living seem to have given up on the idea of racing the world championship because they can't earn any prize money...

LK: "I would love to do GPs. It's a lot of money for a team to commit to doing them but if I did good enough in the British and a team from the GPs >>





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wanted to pick me up it'd definitely be a 'yes'. I couldn't turn down the opportunity."

DBR: What targets have you set yourself for 2017?

LK: "The goal for me is to contend for podiums and once you're contending for podiums you can build on that and try and contend for race wins. I'm hoping to try and get on the podium as much as I can – I've not podiumed at the Maxxis yet but I have in the MX Nationals."

DBR: You've been third in the MX Nationals for the last two years but the Maxxis series is the one everyone wants to win...

LK: "The depth isn't the same in the MX Nationals. I think Martin Barr probably won every race bar one or two this year I guess. I've had some battles with Martin in the MX Nationals – at Wakes Colne he only passed me two laps from the end – and I hope next year I can improve again and maybe be able to do that more consistently."

DBR: How about Jake Millward and Brad Todd? You three have been all over each other in the Maxxis and the MX Nationals this season.

LK: "Jake and Brad will be strong. Brad's really fast – he's got the speed – and so has Jake. I think I've been battling with Jake for the whole of the last two years. We've been pretty close in a lot of races."

"I think we're all good in the sand and with the British championship there's only one hardpack round so we're going to be fast all year and hopefully we'll have some good battles."



Liam will be looking to score a Maxxis podium or more in 2017

SHEFFIELD STEEL!

Young Guns!

After a bumpy start to his pro career Jake Millward has shown great strength of character to dig deep, turn things around and cement his reputation as a rider who's going places — fast...

The first time I paid any attention to Jake Millward was when he was racing towards the Red Bull Pro Nationals Rookie title in 2012.

I then got to know him a bit better through some work I did promoting the UK AX series and he struck me as a typically grounded young man whose racing ambitions were shot through with the sort of down-to-earth realism you expect from a Yorkshire native.

The progression from youth to adult racing is rarely a smooth one and the 22-year-old from Sheffield had a bit of a roller coaster ride when he first made the jump but over the last two years he's developed into a solid top-10 runner who's determined to push for podiums in 2017.

And after moving up to seventh in the Maxxis British Motocross Championship, just a handful of points away from the top five, it's not an unrealistic proposition for him to set his sights on the box...

DBR: The past couple of seasons have been pretty stellar for you, advancing from 27th in the Maxxis series at the end of 2014 to 10th in 2015 and seventh this season...

JM: "To be honest I never thought two years ago when I finished 27th that I'd be as high in the championship as I am now. It's been a great couple of seasons with Verde Sports Racing and going into the off-season I'm feeling very confident about my speed and form."

"At the last round at Foxhill I got a holeshot and led the race for a few laps which felt great and, obviously, it's made me even more determined to get everything sorted over the winter, push that little bit harder and be as well prepared as possible to try and score some podiums next year."

DBR: Your pro career hasn't always been a case of progression though and after finishing 20th in the Maxxis series in 2013 you dropped seven places the following season. What went wrong?

JM: "I was riding for Oakleaf in 2013 but the following year they packed in so I was pretty much riding by myself although I did get some help off Kawasaki. I struggled quite a bit that year and that shows in the results."

DBR: The way you came back in 2015 showed a real strength of character and steely determination. How do you recover like that from such a big disappointment so early on in your career?

JM: "For 2015 I got offered a ride in the off-season with Verde Sports Racing, the team I ride for now. They basically met me at a track, gave me a ride on the bike and pretty much signed me up straight away. "Going from a Kawasaki to a KTM helped me a lot and I found it a much better bike. I seemed to get on with it a lot, lot better and the jump from 27th to 10th in one year was a big improvement and really helped with my confidence."

DBR: A lot of riders struggle to adapt to >>





Jake and the Verde team were a potent match in 2016 and will continue their push to be #1 together in 2017



the feel of a European machine after racing Japanese bikes but that obviously wasn't a problem for you?

JM: "I literally got on it and was a few seconds a lap quicker within 20 minutes of riding it. I clicked with it really well. The bikes they've got are the best bikes I've rode."

DBR: Verde Sports Racing is a little like you in as much as it's a relatively young team with big ambitions...

JM: "The team suits me so well. I know some teams are really strict and under the awning it's very stressed but I couldn't explain how chilled out it is under our awning. We all have a good laugh no matter what the results are."

"Going to a British championship and being under an awning with a team like Verde is definitely a confidence boost. Everything is well organised and runs smooth and the results have just came. The atmosphere really suits me and I'm very happy to be riding for them again in 2017."

DBR: What's on your schedule for next season?

JM: "I'm racing the Maxxis and MX Nationals and maybe doing a few selected EMX250

rounds as well."

DBR: How much international experience do you have?

JM: "I've done the European EMX250 at Matterley Basin for the last two years. The first time I had a big crash in the first race and didn't go out for the second and this year I crashed in the first race and DNFed that and got 20th in the second. It was a great experience and I'd like to do a full year."

DBR: What about GPs?

JM: "You never know. I'd love to do GPs at least for one year – that would be the dream. My aim for next year is get on the podium in the Maxxis and then, hopefully, the year after try and do a few GPs."

DBR: Your consistency has played a big part in your seventh-placed finish – do you realise that out of the top 10 in this year's MX2 class only you and Bryan MacKenzie scored points in every race?

JM: "Really? I didn't know. The bikes this year have been really good and I haven't had any problems with them which has been a big factor

in me being consistent. I've also been getting the starts I've been needing and riding how I know I can ride which has helped me score points in every race."

DBR: When did you start riding?

JM: "I got my first bike when I was about four years old – basically just to ride around a campsite – and I think I did my first race when I was about eight. I started out with a PW50 and I liked it so much that when I began to get a bit bigger my dad bought me a KX60 and it all went from there."

DBR: Is there a family background of racing?

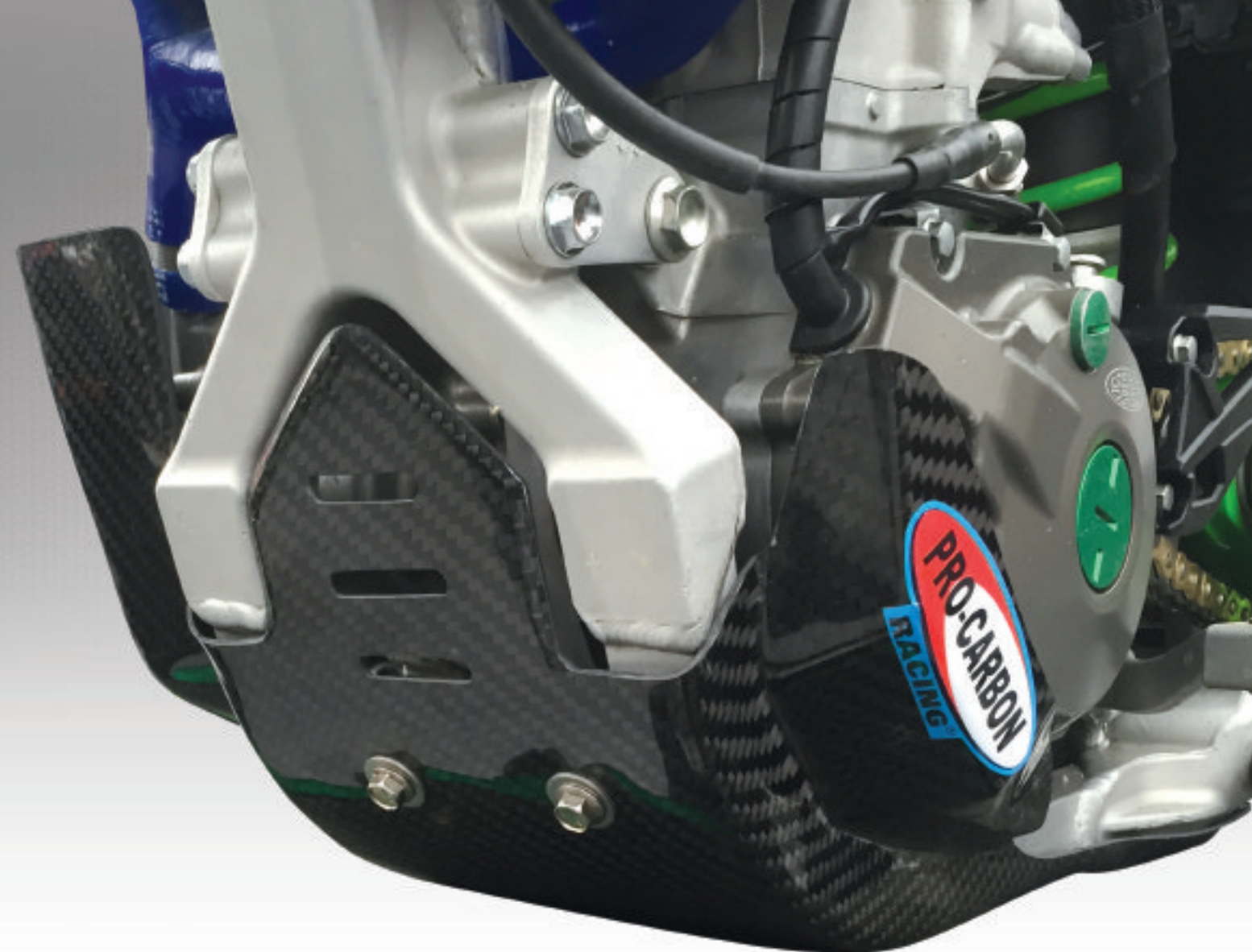
JM: "Not really, no. My dad never raced. He used to ride trials bikes but he never used to race. We literally bought a bike just to ride around the campsite where we had a caravan at the time."

DBR: How did you get on as a youth racer?

JM: "I won quite a lot of club championships. I started off well and I think I won one on a 60, one on a small-wheel and maybe a couple on a big-wheel. I used to race in Yorkshire but I also rode a lot with the Cambridge club. >>

Millward snatched the holey at the Foxhill Maxxis finale and led the pack for a good few laps





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"When I moved up and started doing the nationals the Red Bull Pro Nationals Rookie championship was the first title I won at that level."

DBR: You moved up three places in the Maxxis series but dropped from second to fourth in the Michelin MX Nationals this season...

JM: "The MX Nationals series hasn't gone the best for me this year. The first two rounds were probably the worst rounds I've had in the last couple of years."

"The start didn't really go to plan but it began to come together towards the end of the year and my results showed that. I think I had a few seconds and quite a few thirds but at the start of the season I was getting 10ths and things like that."

DBR: We've also interviewed Liam Knight and Brad Todd for this issue. The three of you have been fierce rivals this year with no-one appearing able to gain a clear advantage...

JM: "It was really close going into the last couple of rounds between me, Liam and Brad. At one of the rounds I had a bad start or crashed or something and they both had a good race while I only just managed to score points. When you're so close together one bad race can give them that edge they need and take the pressure off them."

DBR: What's it been like to have a rider as experienced as Brad Anderson as a team-mate this year?

JM: "I've been riding with Brad quite a bit but he sort of does his own thing and I do my own thing. We get on really well – the whole team gets on really well. It's a great atmosphere and

that's really helped with my results."

DBR: What changes – if any – are you planning to make to your programme during the off-season to help you try and make that next step forward?

JM: "I've worked full-time ever since I left school which I feel is a bit of a disadvantage but I quit my job a few weeks ago and I'm basically riding full-time now."

DBR: It can't be easy competing against riders who can ride and train when they want to when you have to go to work...

JM: "I was doing motocross suspension for a company called Shocktech. They were quite good with me to be honest and I maybe had a day off to go riding every couple of weeks but that still put me at a big disadvantage to people who can go out three or four times every week while I was at work from nine to five."

"It was just one of those things and now I've got the opportunity to ride full-time I'm going to make the most of it."

DBR: So what's changed to allow you to give up your job?

JM: "A personal sponsor – CS2 Transport – has given me the opportunity to ride full-time so I'd like to say a big thank you to Gary. He's a good mate of my dad's who's sponsored me for a few years and who has given me an even better package so I can quit my job."

"I've also now got a personal trainer called Lee Freeman and a nutritionist so, fingers crossed, if everything comes together as well as I know it can I'll hopefully be getting podiums next season. That's my goal."

WORKING CLASS HERO!

Young Guns!

It's been a tough road into the top 10 for Brad Todd but the young man from the North of England had a breakthrough season in 2016 and has his sights set on the top next year . . .

You don't have to come from a wealthy family to succeed in motocross but – let's be honest – it's not going to hurt your chances. We all know you can't buy the skill, determination or balls needed to make it big but money can and will pay for opportunities not available to others.

Brad Todd is one rider who no-one can accuse of being born with a silver spoon in his mouth. The 20-year-old from Wigton in Cumbria has come up through the ranks supported by a family that's constantly made sacrifices.

After a stellar season that saw him finish sixth in the MX2 class of the Maxxis British Motocross Championship, fifth in the Michelin MX Nationals and second in the Pirelli British Masters it's safe to say his talent has finally started to shine through.

We caught up with the Planet Advanced Racing Suspension/Braithwaites Husqvarna pilot to find out all about bikes, budgets and breakthroughs...

DBR: This time last year you were ranked #13 in the country and have jumped seven places in a season. What's happened?

BT: "I used to work and race but last year I decided that I needed to do it full-time. It makes things a lot easier and I can concentrate more on my riding and training."

DBR: So you're a full-time pro now?

BT: "I have to work over the winter as a sort of labourer for an engineering company called MV Edgar but during the season I basically do motocross full-time. I don't get a wage for racing though – I sort of just live off the pennies I can make off prize money."

DBR: Winter is when the pros start preparing for the coming year so, even though you can concentrate on racing during the season, it sounds like you're still at a disadvantage...

BT: "My boss' son races motocross so he understands and they're really good to me here – I can say the day before 'can I go riding tomorrow' and they'll just say 'yeah'."

"I start preparing properly in January and then if I want to go away to Tain for a week or two there are no problems so I can work on my riding whenever I want. They're not strict or anything. I could have tomorrow off if I wanted to but I need to make money."

DBR: Motocross is fairly cheap compared to many motorsports but strong financial backing – or the lack of it – can still make or break a career...

BT: "I've not got the background where I've come from a lot of money but I've still had a >>>





lot of help. My mum and dad have worked their arses off to get me to this point but we really did struggle with money to be honest – a lot of years I only had one bike.

“It wasn’t until Scott Gardner started to help that I had the luxury of having two bikes and now this year there’s been a lot more help coming in with things like fuel. We almost had everything covered this year apart from food. It helped massively. I could go anywhere I wanted to practice and that’s shown in my results.

“Probably my biggest motivation is seeing a rich kid getting it all and then beating them because I’m coming from the background of having nothing. It’s rare you see a really poor lad getting right up there. As a parent you’d probably try and give your son the best opportunities you can but I just haven’t had the

biggest backing with money so it’s nice to be in the position I am.”

DBR: How did your relationship with Scott come about?

BT: “I was having a lot of trouble with suspension [in 2012] and then I changed to Scott at Planet Suspension.

“Over the winter Scott asked me to go and ride for him. He took me over to Ireland where we tested the KTMs. Up until then I’d only ever rode a Honda or a Kawasaki and I loved the bike. Then he helped me with the training – I was pretty clueless and didn’t know what to do with stuff like fitness. It was probably the best thing that could have happened to me.”

DBR: When did you first get serious

about racing?

BT: “I got a bike when I was five and did my first race when I was six. To be honest I was pretty useless on a bike until maybe 2009 which was my last year in the big-wheels. Something just clicked that year and after that everything stepped up.”

DBR: You missed out on the MXY2 title in 2013 after you DNF’d the final race of the championship at Desertmartin. What happened?

BT: “I won the first race and I think I was two points ahead of Rob Davidson coming into the last race but I cased the triple on the back section of the track and the front sprocket just snapped off. I was just absolutely gutted.”





Brad shows Adam Sterry how sweet his new Gaernes are...

DBR: The MXY2 series is designed as a stepping stone into the pro ranks. How hard was it to go from almost winning the title in 2013 to turning pro and finishing back in 17th in 2014?

BT: "I expected too much from myself that year. I was just a young kid thinking I was going to be something special and I wasn't. I qualified something stupid like 30th at the first round and it just messed my head up. That year I spent a lot of time trying to get myself mentally straight."

DBR: The following year you moved up to 13th which, for an ambitious young racer, must have been disappointing progress...

BT: "I felt I should have been further on than what I was last year. My cousins Lee and

Shane Tolson used to race – they were just my idols, they taught me how to ride. Sadly Lee passed away at a track last year. That messed up my year, mentally more than anything. It was hard to swallow. I also had some bike problems but mentally I just wasn't there.

"Towards the end of the year I changed a few things – training and that – just trying to do stuff different to see if I could make myself any better and it seemed to work, everything was almost more chilled in a way."

DBR: Is it fair to describe 2016 as your breakthrough year?

BT: "This year has been my most consistent. I've had no bike problems – my bike's been awesome – and at Desertmartin I came from something like 26th to sixth and I wasn't far off

fourth when I crashed. My sponsor told me he thought that was like a breakthrough race.

"I think this year the class wasn't as strong as the year before but there were still some top guys out there. I can't tell if I'm going faster or if everyone else is slowing down!"

DBR: Four of the five riders in front of you – Adam Sterry, Steven Clarke, Bryan MacKenzie and Martin Barr – all have solid international experience which is a big advantage...

BT: "I think experience is the thing I'm lacking. They've all done GPs and things like that. I'm wanting to make it to GPs and I'm still fairly young so hopefully I can."

DBR: You started the Maxxis really strongly with a career-best fourth overall at Lyng... >>



With no round at Brampton anymore Preston Docks is about as close as Brad gets to racing on home soil



BT: "Lyng was really good. My riding I don't think was there, it was just consistency. It was a big confidence boost. It's also one of my favourite tracks – last year I had a really good result there too. I haven't rode the track a lot – I think it was only my fourth or fifth time there – but it's one of those tracks that I seemed to have gelled with."

DBR: Over the years you seem to have had your best results at places like Lyng and Desertmartin. It's easy to think of you as a sandfly who cut his teeth turning laps at Brampton...

BT: "To be honest I don't really have a preference. Sand's the hardest surface to ride and I kinda think if you can ride sand you can ride anything but at the MX Nationals at Wakes

Colne I hadn't touched hardpack in something like 10 or 12 weeks and that was my first ever Pro race win.

"I think hardpack is all about going fast and sand is about technique and you need to be fit and be thinking about line choice all the time. I'd say I'm probably a better sand rider but on hardpack I'm not far off where I am in sand and I can still get good results."

DBR: On the subject of the MX Nationals, you could potentially have been third but missed a full round. What happened there?

BT: "At Canada Heights I crashed in practice on Saturday and woke up in the morning and couldn't turn my neck. I went out in qualifying and was something like 20th and knew I wasn't going to get anywhere so we just called it a day,

packed up and went home."

DBR: The British Masters may not have had the depth of talent as the Maxxis or the MX Nationals but you must be happy with second in the championship behind Martin Barr?

BT: "That was a really good result because I managed to finish just in front of the Apico Husqvarna team riders. It was Martin and then me so it'll look good on the CV."

DBR: Who do you see as your main rivals next season?

BT: "I never think about rivals to be honest. I just try and stick it in my head that I'm the fastest. If Martin's still in the class he's probably going to be the one to beat but I don't really know what everyone's doing."

Young Guns!

SCOTT GARDNER

A bit from the boss

Scott Gardner was one of the first 'industry' insiders to spot Brad's raw talent and quickly gave him a free ride on his Planet Advanced Racing Suspension team.

"Brad's got more talent in his little finger than most riders out there have in their whole bodies. It's not hard for him to go fast. I've seen Wayne Smith and Brad Anderson bust their arses to go fast but that's not the case with Brad and if the track's rough, tough and technical I know we're going to have a good day."

Old-school in his approach to racing, Scott – who'd helped shape northern racers Wayne Smith and Brad Anderson – is a tough task-master with no-nonsense methods.

"At first I wouldn't let him ride a bike that was fast, I just made him ride a stocker. He kept saying 'I need a faster bike' and I told him 'until I see that bike being ridden as fast as it can be ridden you don't need a faster one'."

Jem Whatley adopted a similar philosophy when his son Kristian started racing and within three seasons Scott had the Cumbrian knocking on the door of Britain's elite riders.

"Last year we should have been easily in the top 10 but we had a few issues with gearboxes but our bikes have been real reliable this year."

Brad readily admits that he needs to adopt the mindset of a champion to match his speed and skills – a fact not lost on his Scottish mentor.

"I think that Brad should be top three in the British championship next year – the only thing that's stopping him is the six inches between his ears. If I'm really honest Brad's had two rides this year that I've enjoyed watching – Desertmartin when he crashed out because he was going fast and Wakes Colne when he finished both races with rear wheel punctures but I just knew the way he was racing he wasn't letting anyone beat him.

"They're the only two races this year I'd actually say he's rode as well as he can, the rest of the time it looks like he's running around at about 90 per cent. He says he doesn't feel that but everyone who knows him and sees him practising and racing locally agrees.

"If there was a British championship at Brampton he wouldn't be beat. He's so fast around Brampton but I don't see that speed at other tracks. He's not taking that riding capability to the British championship but every winter we're always stronger when we come out than we were going in and this winter that's what we're going to work on.

"I don't think he's a million miles away. It's more in his head and that's what we need to sort – the rest is there."



Brad puts the power to the ground at Foxhill

"Me and Liam Knight have had some good battles this year so he'll be tough to beat. This year he didn't start off blinding but he's just so consistent it's unbelievable. Jake Millward's also been very fast so I'll have to watch for him."

DBR: Liam beat you by just a handful of points in the Maxxis this season...

BT: "It went down to the wire with him at the end of the season. At Preston Docks I got a fifth in the first race and in the second I got a puncture two laps in. I was still eighth until three or four laps to go and then the tyre came off the wheel and I had to cruise it around and finished 18th.

"If bad luck hadn't hit me in a couple of races like that DNF at Desertmartin

and then Preston I would have been fifth in the championship but I'm sure Liam would be saying the same after what happened at the start of the year."

DBR: So what does 2017 and beyond hold in store for you?

BT: "Next year I think the key is to be calm because when I ride a local race I'm a total different rider. I can relax and be really aggressive but when it comes to a British round I'm a lot more tense on the bike but I think that will change when I get more experience.

"I want to be British champion and I want even bigger things. Like I said I'd love to get into the GPs but it's all down to the money and finding people who can help out."



YAMAHA



Slam!

Radical Ryan Houghton rides no fewer than six factory Yamahas at Maggiora . . .

Words by Ryan Houghton Photos by Yamaha

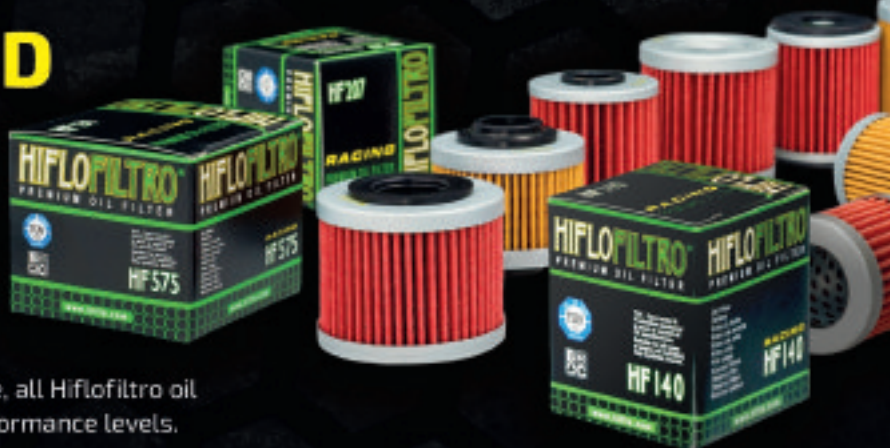
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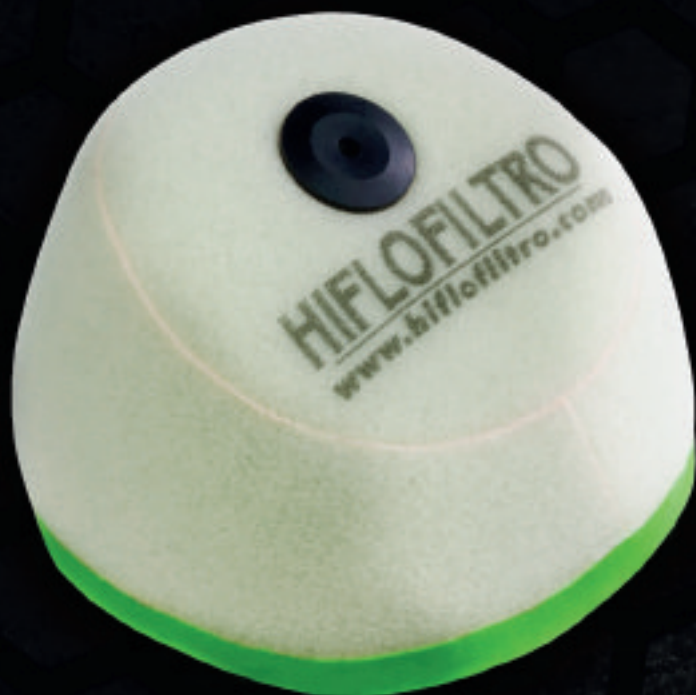


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Radical Ryan Houghton ties Benoit Paturel's Kemea YZ250F in knots at Maggiora



t's factory test time again and this month I was allowed to swing my leg over some of what I think are the best looking bikes in the paddock – the factory Yamahas – in both 250 and 450 guises. I even got to smash the booming Grand Prix specials around one of the most famous tracks ever two days after the most famous event ever. You know it must be exciting when you girlfriend understands that you're testing on the MXoN track she's just watched on the box!

I must say it was pretty weird watching the MXoN two days before on TV and seeing how packed it was and then turning up there and finding it deserted. Well, deserted apart from the 100 blokes trying to clean all the mess up. The coolest thing for me was that the track hadn't been graded at all which made it properly challenging. Normally on these tests you turn up and the tracks are like the M25 – flat and round – so it was good to be able to put the bikes to test on a race track.

First up for a Houghton-style thrashing (that's possibly the only time you'll ever find the words 'Houghton' and 'style' used together – Suttty) was the Kemea 250 Yamahas on which Benoit Paturel and Brent van Doninck piloted in the MX2 world champs this season.

Now these are seriously amazing bikes. The bikes are styled so well using clean lines with beautifully accompanying graphics. They are a real delight to look at and the small team does a great job under the guidance of former four-time vice-world champion Marnicq Bervoets.

21-year-old Frenchman Paturel took this bike to three podium finishes this season and ended up with third in the world but heck his suspension is not for me. I found the bike bottoming out a lot and the set-up is so much softer than his team-mate's.

I'd only ever seen Maggiora on my 50-incher at home and television genuinely doesn't do the place justice. Those hills are seriously steep. Under braking Paturel's bike really squatted to the ground while Van Doninck's bike is set

much more neutral. This is all down to the rider's weight and their personal preferences and Van Doninck has his suspension nearer to what I'd be comfortable with. Clearly Benoit gets the most out of what the Kemea team can provide him with.

One thing I loved about the Kemea bikes was the engine. They might not be the fastest out there on the GP trail but they run beautifully. Factory bikes are geared really long – I have noticed that on every one I've ridden up to now – and the 250 Yams are no different. The way they are geared just makes the ride a lot less busy, if you know what I mean. Running into corners you can just hold it on and the bike just keeps on revving which is a real nice feeling.

To get a comparison of what different teams can do with the same equipment Yamaha also wheeled out the Wilvo Standing Construct machine as ridden by Russkie Aleksandr Tonkov. Although they are both factory teams I felt that the Wilvo-tuned 250 had the advantage on power over the Kemea guys. >>



Brent van Doninck's set-up is more neutral than Paturel's



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Aleksandr Tonkov might be having Visa issues but his YZ250F has no problem at all when it comes to flying in foreign countries...

A case in point is that Tonkov has his second gear slightly lengthened to give him them extra few metres off the start before he has to shift to third. I managed to practice a few race starts on it and you have to be really aggressive and keep that rear wheel spinning or you get too much traction and she just wants to wheelie away!

The brakes were nothing special but done the job good enough...

The standard Yamaha 250 is one of the best turning bikes out there so if you can add this to a factory engine and a set of factory KYB suspension you have concocted a seriously competitive bike.

I must say I preferred the Wilvo bike over the Kemea bike purely for the for the fact I found the power better to ride with but both were quick and turned on a sixpence so you can see why the YZ250F found its way onto GP podiums several times this year.

The bike I was most excited about riding was that of outgoing world champion Romain Febvre but who wouldn't be? Not everyone gets a chance like this although I was a tad nervous to start with. A standard 450 Yamaha is chuffing fast but this thing was on another level. But in contrast to the arm-pulling effort it takes to ride a big standard YZF450 fast the Frenchman's bike is just effortless to ride.

The power curve is something you dream of – so long, so smooth and so enjoyable. The bike allows you to ride and push really hard in certain areas where another big bore bike would just bite you in the arse. I literally felt myself making up so much time through tight corners – >>



Tonkov's Wilvo team bike seemed to have more power than the Kemea machine





Jeremy van Horebeek's YZ450F is well known for it's strangely placed seat bump. Ryan wasn't a fan...



you just hit the gas and the bike goes forward with real ease.

As I've said before with factory bikes – and especially 450s – you just don't need to change gear. Febvre's third gear is good for 90 per cent of that Maggiora track and there are some really tight bits out there!

Having electric start was mega and the benefits of the system really outweigh the cost for all levels of rider so I still don't understand why the production bikes don't have them yet. Also having a hydraulic clutch for me will always be better because you get that slightly better feel compared with a cable operated version.

The only thing on that bike I didn't like was the big bump in the seat. Being a gangly bastard you'd think it would be handy for me but wasn't and I felt like I had my balls in the fuel tank at times but Van Horebeek runs one too so they must be good. I think with all that power the bikes produce off the start with their launch control you do need some kind of lip on the seat to plant your arse into. Maybe it's worth investing in one to see if it makes a difference.

Jeremy van Horebeek's YZ450F is a little different. The Belgian runs a stiffer set-up than Romain but that is understandable because he probably weighs about 15kg more than his

team-mate. On top of that his power curve isn't as smooth a Febvre's – he has a much more aggressive punch of power. Boom!

I found coming out of corners was a lot trickier on the #89 machine but if you're fit and in good condition it works. I can imagine if you're not in peak condition 35 minutes on his bike would be bloody hard work just booming from corner to corner, trying to control that awesome power.

I couldn't tell you how much development work Van Horebeek has done with the Yamaha but he is obviously a valuable asset having done big jobs at KTM and Kawasaki in the past. Yamaha seemed to be struggling a bit after Cairoli's world title in 2009 but the Jerre has helped turn them firstly into constant GP podium runners in 2014 before Febvre picked up the gauntlet and rolled over the opposition in 2015.

They are of course double MXoN winners as well (Febvre again) and the signs are coming good in the 250 class in America especially with Jeremy Martin and Cooper Webb performing to the highest level. Even in Grand Prix the satellite Yams of Guillod and Paturel have brought the YZ250F to the podium in the past two years. There's no doubting that these blue babies are real weapons in the right hands.

The factory 450 is
a real weapon



Tech Specs

Monster Energy YZ450FM

Displacement: 449.7cc
Bore x stroke: 97 x 60.8mm
Compression ratio: 13.8:1
Lubrication system: Wet sump | Hydraulic clutch
Clutch type: Wet, Multiple Disc
Fuel system: Fuel Injection
Ignition system: TCI
Starter system: Electric
Transmission system: Constant Mesh, 4-speed
Final transmission: Chain
Frame: Semi double cradle
Front suspension system: Upside-down telescopic
Front travel: 310mm
Caster angle: 26° 50
Trail: 118mm
Rear suspension system: Swingarm, (link suspension) works type
Rear travel: 315mm
Front brake: Hydraulic single disc 270mm
Rear brake: Hydraulic single disc 220mm
Overall length: 2,170mm
Overall width: 825mm
Overall height: 1,280mm
Seat height: 965mm
Wheelbase: 1,475mm
Minimum ground clearance: 330mm
Wet weight (including full oil): 104kg
Fuel tank capacity: 7 litres
Oil capacity: 0.9 litres

Kemea/Wilvo Standing Construct YZ250F

Displacement: 250cc
Bore x stroke: 77.0 mm x 53.6mm
Compression ratio: 13.5:1
Lubrication system: Wet sump
Clutch type: Wet, Multiple Disc
Fuel system: Fuel Injection
Ignition system: TCI
Starter system: Kick
Transmission system: Constant Mesh, 5-speed
Final transmission: Chain
Frame: Semi double cradle
Front suspension system: Upside-down telescopic
Front travel: 310mm
Caster angle: 26° 50
Trail: 118mm
Rear suspension system: Swingarm (link suspension)
Rear travel: 315mm
Front brake: Hydraulic single disc 270mm
Rear brake: Hydraulic single disc 245mm
Overall length: 2,17 mm
Overall width: 825mm
Overall height: 1,280mm
Seat height: 965mm
Wheel base: 1,475mm
Minimum ground clearance: 330mm
Wet weight (including full oil and fuel tank): 105kg
Fuel tank capacity: 7.5 litres
Oil capacity: 0.9 litre



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MX SUPER CHAMPIONS

One week after the MXoN at Maggiora, Red Bull Italy hosted the third edition of the MX Super Champions at the very same venue. Open to Italian Amateurs only the now well established event accepts entries from 400 riders in eight categories – 65cc up to MX1 – for two days of action each autumn. Fingers crossed that someone picks up with this idea and runs something similar in the UK next year – perhaps on the weekend between the Des Nats and Weston Beach Race?



2017

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300Fi MX
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530Fi MX

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144 EN
250 EN
300 EN

(Electric Start STANDARD on all 4t EN models and retains conventional kick-start)

250Fi ENes
300Fi ENes
450Fi ENes
530Fi ENes

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(Electric Start OPTION on all 4t MX models and retains conventional kick-start)

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 Tel: 01636 678533

Adrian Lappin Motorcycles
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 Tel: 07767 402133

DMC
 Dunfermline, Scotland
 Tel: 01383 732952

Meredith MX
 Brislington, Bristol
 Tel: 01179 714873

TM Motorcycles
 Sherburn In Elmet, Leeds
 Tel: 01977 680291

Washbrook Farm MX
 Doddington, Cambridgeshire
 Tel: 01354 740442

CCM Racing
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111 MEGAWATT!

111 mega what now? 111 Megawatt is a Polish Hard Enduro that was originally envisaged by Taddy Blazusiak. Held in a disused coal mine near Belchatow, the event is situated pretty centrally in Poland and is surprisingly only 125 miles further than the drive to Erzberg which makes it a damn slight closer to the UK than the Romaniacs starting point of Sibiu which makes it very reachable indeed.

The two day event is gaining popularity year on year with riders from around the globe. A one-lap timed dash whittles the entry down to 500 starters for Sunday's main race. After setting off in rows of 75, the mixture of sandy, rocky and man-made going makes the three-hour main event more of a sprint than an all-out slog like Erzberg – that said, get stuck in the slag heaps and you may find yourself having to push your way out of trouble!

Won for the last two years by Brit Jonny Walker it's worth keeping an eye on www.redbull.com/uk/ if you fancy giving it a go yourself...





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EPIC RISE

If there's one thing Italians love more than pizza, pasta and peroni it's 'peds – nope, I'm not on about performance enhancing drugs here but motorised pedal bikes of the two-stroke engine variety. Also a nation of motorsports freaks, some genius or other figured out a way of combining their two passions and came up with an absolutely doozy of an off-road event they call Epic Rise.

Basically, a hill climb event for moped riders in three classes – Stock (up to 65cc with standard running gear), Trick (anything goes but the original frame, engine and clutch are used) and Proto (the F1-style specials of the moped hill climbing world) – Epic Rise is held on the 50 metre slopes of former MXGP-circuit Malpensa (yep, it's right next to the airport) and draws in an eclectic mix of moto-nuts including eight-time world champ Tony Cairoli!



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GET ON TOP

More hill climb madness – this time from Porubka in Slovakia. As an event Get On Top has been around for many years but a new head-to-head style format gave it a new lease of life for 2016. The new concept is pretty simple – leave the start gate, battle through a small endurocross section, then climb an epic hill that has logs strategically placed across it, faster than the guy next to you. Sounds easy but the reality is far from it...

This year's event attracted well over 120 riders – mostly Slovaks, Czechs and the odd Polish dude – and with a bargainous 25 euro registration fee that's not so surprising. If you want to get on up to Get On Up keep an eye on the Motorsports section of www.redbull.com/sk next summer...



ROMANIACS

Quite probably the world's #1 multi-day enduro – in terms of social media reach if nothing else – the Romaniacs is a brutal affair that has everyone bar the very best of riders basically pushing their bikes through the Carpathian mountains for four days. However, despite being tougher than a two dollar steak there's something about the race that makes it highly enjoyable and a little bit addictive as the Romanian terrain is just so damn good that the race is normally oversubscribed each and every year.

Heck, even getting there can be an adventure in itself with corrupt cops and kamikaze truckers making the drive from the Romanian border to the host town of Sibiu even scarier than some of the man-made obstacles on the Prologue.

As former competitors we reckon this race should be on every enduro rider's bucket list and although it's not cheap to compete it's well worth every penny. For more details log on to www.redbullromaniacs.com.





SEA TO SKY

The Sea to Sky is billed as the world's most enjoyable hard enduro and offers competitors three separate styles of competition in three days from the base of Kemer, Turkey. This diversity – and late summer sunshine – means that the Sea to Sky is rapidly becoming a must-attend event for all British Hard Enduro fans despite being situated around 2,250 miles from Calais!

Starting with a 15-minute blast on the beach before moving into a two-hour forest race on day two, the third and final stage of the race is a blast up Olympus Mountain (a climb of 2,365 metres) that must be completed in seven hours – although the fastest guys are normally done and dusted within three or four. A huge beach party and awards ceremony wraps things up before racers fly or drive home.

Check out www.redbullseatosky.com for more info!



GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN...



City Scramble

This is no joke but way back on April 1, 2012 the fine city of Auckland in New Zealand hosted the Red Bull City Scramble. Basically an inner-city endurocross race – that ventured out onto the bay using floating pontoons – this event was ultimately won by UK hard enduro ace Graham Jarvis riding a two-stroke Husaberg. Grimbo took home 5,000 New Zealand dollars for his efforts after beating off some pretty stiff competition down by the bay...

Donkey Cross

If you desire no-holds-barred donkey and dirt bike action then Donkey Cross would've been right

up your street. Combining the two very different modes of transport the good people of Red Bull Greece delivered this Greek tragedy on no fewer than three occasions, allowing absolute asses to put their asses on asses before embarking on some kind of hard enduro around the Greek town of Makrinita straight after. That's fairly weird, right?



At the traditional 250 grand prix season opener in Sabadell Semmens soars to a sensational fourth place in the first moto in front of 50,000 Spanish fans!

Many seventies' stars sported missing front teeth! Semmens (right) with loyal sponsor Doug Wheeler (centre) and Rob Hooper at the 1979 German 250GP. Happy days!



V A U G H A N

STAR!

THE 1970S BRED A CERTAIN STYLE OF MOTOCROSS SUPERHERO AND VAUGHAN SEMMENS WAS CERTAINLY MORE THAN MAN ENOUGH TO FILL THAT ROLE...

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle

The career of the late Vaughan Semmens covered one of the most seismic decades in motocross history – the 1970s – when Japan's big four manufacturers poured limitless resources into conquering the off-road world. Suzuki, already in control of 250GPs by the end of the sixties, wrenched the 500cc crown from Europe in 1971. Only Flying Finn Heikki Mikkola and his Husky would interrupt Roger DeCoster's domination of the bigger class before Yamaha took over with Mikkola at the helm.

But Europe fought back in 250GPs; KTM won their first crown with Russian Gennady Moiseev in 1974, Harry Everts and Puch triumphed in 1975, Mikkola and Husqvarna in 1976 and Moiseev again for KTM in 1977 and '78. The 'Yurpeens' weren't done yet! But the major British manufacturers, including world and European motocross championship winners AJS, BSA and Greeves – the marque on which Semmens had first risen to national prominence in the early seventies – melted away...

At home the ACU radically overhauled the British Motocross championship. Up until 1974 it had comprised 250 and 500cc classes, plus a recently added 125 series. But 1975 saw the dawn of a single British Open championship featuring

a seeded Top 30 (later expanded to 35 and then 40) and a qualifying support series.

Semmens was one of a raft of young blood included that year, seeded number 15 on his 360 Bultaco ahead of Graham Noyce (16) and Roger Harvey (17) with Rob Hooper (28), Pete Mathia (29) and Geoff Mayes (30) also in the mix. The low numbers went to established old boys Vic Allan, Malcolm Davis, John Banks, Vic Eastwood and Andy Robertson!

The latter half of the decade also witnessed a suspension revolution led by Yamaha's triangulated rear swingarm mated to a horizontal single rear shock mounted beneath the fuel tank. Kawasaki's Uni-Trak followed in 1979, featuring a vertical single shock in front of the rear wheel, though Honda's first world title was achieved by Englishman Graham Noyce on his old twin-shocker!

That season also marked Vaughan's mercurial debut in GPs on a Doug Wheeler Maico, contesting a 1979 250 series in which virtually the whole field was mounted on European hardware. Semmens' amazing rookie year was topped and tailed by a fourth place in the opening moto at Sabadell, in Spain and a third place in the final round at Bielstein, Germany. 12th overall, he was the only privateer to feature in the final top 20.

>>

Semmens (490 Maico) hurtles round Ruskeasanta during the 1979 MX des Nations



Original 1975 Top 30 British Open Championship featured young guns Semmens (Bultaco 15), Roger Harvey (17) and Rob Hooper (28) on Doug Wheeler Huskies and Randy Owen (CZ 23) taking on sixties' superstar Dave Bickers (14 CZ)



1978 British Open Championship, the majestic setting of Howe Hills, County Durham and Semmens (Maico 15) holeshots alongside Paul Harrison (Maico 26) ahead of Steve Beamish (19) Andy Robertson (2) Norman Barrow (17) Willie Simpson (32) Graham Noyce (1) and Dave Watson (35)

Semmens scythes to seventh in the 1978 British Open Championship on his Doug Wheeler Maico



Semmens was seeded 15 in the first British Open Championship on a Comerfords Bultaco in 1975



In a superb 1973 period paddock setting Vaughan (left) admires future wife Gaynor! Alongside him loyal mechanic John Cox contemplates giving up racing after yet another injury!!

Vaughan (Maico 12) hauls a heroic holeshot at the 1979 German 250GP ahead of world champions Moiseev (1), Carlqvist ((28) and Hudson (10)



He also muscled his 490 Maico to fourth place in the British Open series behind Noyce, Neil Hudson and Geoff Mayes and was selected for the Motocross des Nations in Finland. Round the fiercely fast forested sand track of Ruskeasanta, near Helsinki, he joined forces with Noyce and fellow Maico pilots Hudson and Hooper. It proved an epic. Noyce flew to second in race one with Hudson sixth but Hooper pitted to replace a broken wheel and when Semmens ran out of fuel 100 yards short of the flag Great Britain desperately needed his 14th place finish. The Brummie duly obliged, somehow forcing his silent Maico through the soft sand before collapsing beneath the chequered flag to a standing ovation from the vast crowd.

This effort took its toll in race two but its importance became clear when Noyce smashed his knee and pulled out. Hudson rode smoothly to fourth and with Hooper scything past the Russians to finish seventh GB had beaten heavyweights

Germany, Russia, Holland and Sweden to clinch the silver medal behind Belgium!

Semmens sadly never got to race his number four plate in the UK, nor enjoy another season in GPs. A freak accident at Frome's early season national in 1980 badly broke his femur and after complications and bone grafts it was two years before he made a tentative return to the track, his first class career finished.

Three time world champ Dave Thorpe actually topped the support championship during Semmens' stand-out 1979 season. "Vaughan was one of those established professionals who inspired me when I was an up and coming kid," says Thorpe. "They were hard, fast riders and I learned a lot from them. He was also a thoroughly nice guy."

And a photographer's dream; a hustling, bustling broadsider, always on the gas and giving it the max. Check out this gallery of images capturing the spirit of a decade and a racer...

Vaughan fends off 'The First American' Jim Pomeroy to nail third place by a second on the line in the 1979 German 250GP at slick, stoney Bielstein



Semmens launches his Maico through the trees at Bielstein in the 1979 German GP

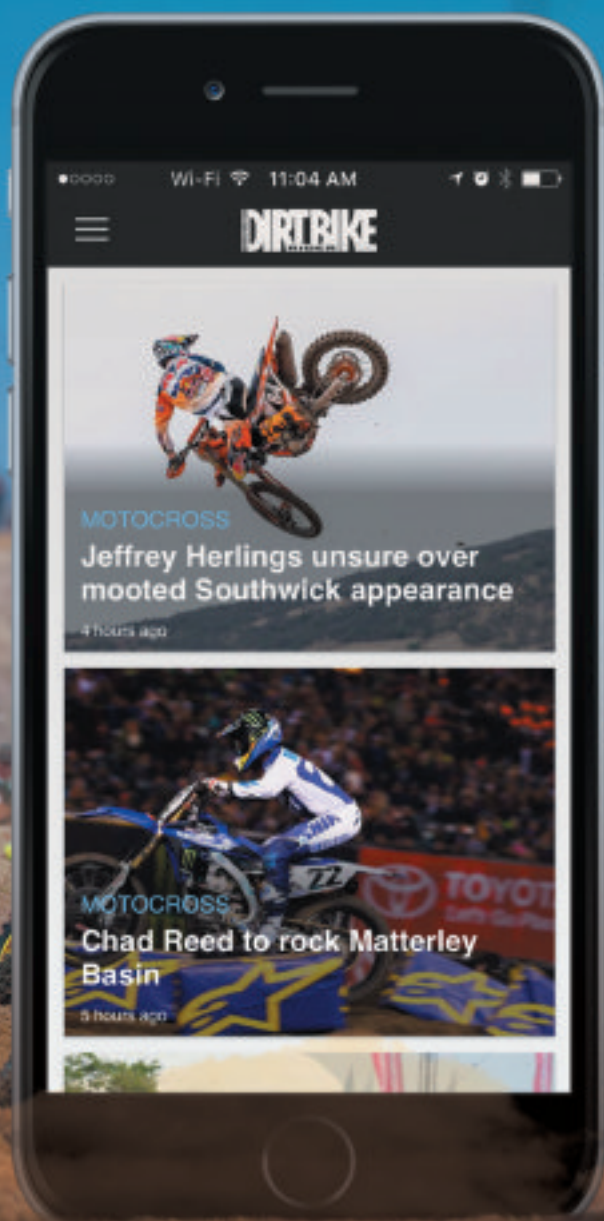


Semmens, Neil Hudson, Rob Hooper and Graham Noyce do their bit for Queen and country at the MXdN



Vaughan collapses to a deafening ovation after pushing his dry Maico 100 metres through strength-sapping sand to finish the first moto of the 1979 MX des Nations





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OVER AND OUT!

IT'S THE END OF THE ROAD FOR OUR 2016 RM-Z 250 AS DAN SIGNS OFF WITH A FEW WORDS OF WISDOM...

Words and photos by **Dan Grove, Ady Cowshall and Scorch Images**

If you read my last update on the long termer RM-Z you'll remember the addition of the Apico oversize disc kit that I had recently installed. This mod transformed the bike in the fact that it took much less effort to slow down for the corners and gave a consistent and predictive feel at the lever, making riding and racing less tiring and improving my pace.

However, about three days after typing up my update and hitting the send button I went and turned the disc into a metallic Pringle. It wasn't me personally and in actual fact I still don't know – and never will know – what went through the front wheel to cause so much damage. Initially I assumed that it was a stone but since some time has passed I'm thinking it was something metallic like a bolt or something.

I was racing at Culham with Severn Valley and the track conditions on this day were superb. In fact I'd go as far as saying that it was the best track that I've ridden or raced on in years – possibly since I raced at Wakes Colne back in 2009!

It had rained nearly all day the day prior so the track was definitely loamy, rough, and rutty and the full width of the track was used all the way around the course. The disc didn't get damaged on track though – it can't have. While checking the bike over before the last race the wheel would only turn with a lot of force and when it did the

lever was pulsing while the caliper slid from side to side. Therefore this can't have happened during the race as I'd have noticed this instantly so whatever it was must have got through there just before putting the bike back on the stand after race two.

With my good buddy Dooley we whipped the wheel out, removed the caliper bracket, replaced the disc and reinstalled the wheel only to find that the lug on the hub was bent inwards which pulled the standard disc out of shape, resulting in another non turning wheel and pulsating lever. Bugger!

I remembered after the string of races that I'd entered recently that you can log into the Mylaps – now Speedhive – website and see each and every lap time of each race. I've been feeling really good on the bike over the last couple of months and I wasn't really surprised to see that my fastest lap times have occurred towards the end of the races and even on the last lap on a few occasions. So it's safe to say that I've regained my bike fitness and the bike is that dialled in that I'm able to push all the way to the flag and even past it to avoid any Jason Anderson type scenarios.

After getting the front wheel replaced and reverting back to the stock disc for my final few rides as well as installing a Pro Carbon Racing disc guard. It's a little bit of a late addition to the bike but with writing off one disc I don't fancy

doing the same to another and with the coverage that the guard provides I can't see it happening.

My next ride out was actually my first time practicing in two months as I'd been racing quite often and I visited a practice track called Weatheroak MX which you can see from the M42 near the Hopwood Park service station, just south of Birmingham. It's a nice track, all natural with no jumps and with it being on a hillside you encounter some nice off cambers. A few jumps would be a nice addition but then jumps always increase the risk of someone doing themselves mischief.

The track featured the longest and fastest uphill that I've been up on the RM-Z this year and just as I was reaching the top of it you could feel the bike signing off just a little. Bear in mind that this was a fourth gear wide open uphill that just went on and on and on!

This was certainly a unique feature of the track and something not found too often nowadays. I switched to the rich map which certainly helped the bike maintain drive at the top of this hill but in the off cambers on the track that turned back uphill I was losing out a little as it takes some of the bottom-end power away and places it at the top and given that there is a few of these I reverted to the stock map.

The RM-Z came into its own on the rough downhill and off-camber corners just as it did at Farleigh Castle a couple of months ago however



I did struggle with slowing down for some corners with the standard size disc so it proved my point that the oversize disc does wonders for the RM-Z 250. I have no doubts that the RM-Z 450 would also benefit from this upgrade as well given that 450's are much faster. If I could recommend just one upgrade to the Suzuki's then an oversize disc would be it.

And with that, comes the end of my first year as a DBR long-term test rider and all in all it's been a learning year and a little frustrating with my back injury picked up mid-season. Since then though it's been awesome and riding the RM-Z 250 has been a pleasure thanks to it being so easy to ride thanks to its great suspension and handling.

You really can get on any line you want with this bike so as the track gets rougher you can get on to smooth lines easily and the bike is just

a perfect package. You may have noticed that the Renthal chain and sprockets haven't made their way onto the bike but these are being saved for another project so keep your eyes peeled in future issues of this magazine.

After a year on this bike I have some suggestions that will improve the bike for not a huge amount of money.

Change the bars as the standard bend is peculiar – they have a lot of sweep and seem to bend down on the ends.

Buy a sump guard (and I think anyone with a four-stroke should have one) as unlike two-strokes there isn't a big expansion chamber that offers a fair bit of protection from stones and roost.

Get an oversize front disc as these genuinely transform the bike. A disc guard would be a wise

investment after what happened last month.

Remove the rear disc and brake caliper guard to prevent the rear brake getting too hot.

Cut out the side panel air intake holes (carefully) to not restrict air-flow through the engine.

If you've just bought a new one or have one with standard grips, buy an aftermarket throttle tube to save carving the standard one off.

And lastly, it's not just been me and the bike this year, there's a few people that I need to extend my thanks to for getting me through this year and providing some quality products, service, and advice. So in no particular order – Suzuki Bikes UK, Renthal, Putoline, Metzeler, Pro Carbon Racing, SR75 Racing, Samco Sport, Bike Alert (JT Racing chain, sprockets, brake discs, and HifloFiltro oil and air filters), Neil Prince, ESP Graphics, Apico, Karcher.



TRACK ATTACK!

TOOFAST MAX VISITS SUNNY SCUNNY TO TAKE IN ONE OF THE NORTH'S MANY MOTOCROSS TREASURES – KIERADAN PARK...

Words by **Max Hind** Photos by yorksterphotography.co.uk



Kieradan Park may well be one of the friendliest and most welcoming practice facilities I have ever had to pleasure of attending. The family-friendly atmosphere combined with the fun and flowy layout of the circuit makes this one of the north's premier dirt bike tracks as well as one of the best kept secrets in the industry.

Kieradan Park is a relatively young circuit compared to a lot of tracks around the country. Only being established in 2009, KP has grown and developed over the years to become a go to spot for riders in the north and beyond.

The track started out life seven years ago as a site for disengaged kids to learn mechanical skills on bikes before taking them out for a spin. Seven years on and that programme is still going strong. There is now a purpose built classroom and workshop for these kids to come to during school time and the kids/minibike track that they get to ride is honestly one of the best I've ever seen. What a great way to introduce the sport to new kids

and potential riders that may have never had the chance otherwise.

This is just one example of how Pete and the team at Kieradan really display a passion for the sport, the track and the people that come along. Just little touches such as the printed out timetable for the day you get as you sign on (to ensure you never miss your session) and the purpose built sandpit for the kids to build their own mini dirt bike tracks give a genuine good vibe feeling around the paddock.

Kieradan Park is open on Saturdays and Sundays throughout the year (that's weather dependent and I've been assured that the track is only ever open when the circuit is actually in a decent rideable condition. No answer-phone fibs here...) and on Wednesdays during the school holidays. Riding hours are from 10am to 3:30pm although that can sometimes be pushed back to 4pm if there are any unforeseen stoppages with a half hour lunch break at one o'clock.

Moving on to the circuit itself... For





what is essentially a flat field near Scunthorpe, the KP team have somehow moulded an incredibly fun and flowing track that is near on impossible not to enjoy.

In my opinion this comes down to two different factors – the soil and the layout! The soil is rich and loamy and cuts up like a dream. There's a perfect mixture of ruts and berms to really chew into and you just feel as though you have grip for days. The track does cut up and get rough but not too rough – it's always rideable and enjoyable for everyone.

The layout is super fun. The track design is in my opinion very American, very fast, flowy and open (although the track does get a little narrow in places). Almost every corner on the track has a wide line or berm that you can try to smash/rail to the best of your ability which is tons of fun! And then there are the inside lines, deep berms or ruts which are probably faster but definitely not as fun!

The track doesn't feature anything too technical in terms of obstacles or jumps, there's one decent sized double and one huge 120 foot tabletop that are in my opinion the only things that could cause pause for thought. The rest of the jumps (and there are a few) are a mix of small and medium sized tabletops that are all very safe and very manageable for everyone.

I'd say that the track is a great place for intermediate, novice and beginner level riders to get started and build confidence while also being a place where the expert and pro level riders can come to have a lot of fun. The track is graded

and prepped before/after every riding day and also watered during the lunch break if needed.

The passion the guys have for the sport and the track extends into the facilities they have to offer. Catering is always open on site (even on a Wednesday), the brick and mortar toilet block is very fancy for us dirt bike hounds and the resident photographer (Yorkster) is always on hand to catch some snaps of you having some fun around this great track. There are plans in place to improve these facilities further with a purpose built café and spares/parts shop in the pipeline.

In terms of health and safety, marshals are always present as are the medics and on the weekend the chief marshal is on hand to keep everything running smoothly.

I think the best review I could ever give to Kieradan Park is simply saying that I will definitely be back. For me the journey to the track is a pain in the butt, and it takes a damn while. But I'm more than happy to sacrifice a few hours of driving around the North Lincolnshire/South Yorkshire countryside if it means that I get to shred some laps around Kieradan...

CONCLUSION

Difficulty – a playground for everyone!

Fun factor – sky high!

Facilities – they have a sand pit. What more do you want?

Overall DBR score – what Arnie said "I'll be back"!

ESSENTIAL INFO!

KIERADAN PARK

Location: Scunthorpe, DN17 3PS

Length: 1600 metres

Prices: Kids £25 Adults £30

Contact: 07824 515168

Surface: Loamy soil

Shop: Spares van

Catering: Yes

Kids Track: Yes

Coaching: Track used by coaches

Toilets/wash block: Yes

Opening times: 10:00am – 3:30pm/4pm

Difficulty: Medium

Enjoyment Factor: High

Suitability: Everyone

Session length: 20 minutes

Groups: Three – Kids, Intermediate, Expert...

BACK TO THE FUTURE!

**MAX (AKA MARTY MCFLY) FINALLY TAKES THE
BTTF YZ 125 FOR A SPIN AT THE MILK RUN -
BRAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAPPP!**

Words and photos by TooFast Media



It's been a whimsical adventure. We've travelled back through time and returned to an alternate reality in which my tatty old YZ 125 is now an absolute stunner – a full blown head turner – all thanks to Doc Brown's (aka Roland Shaw's) whacky shenanigans!

Just as I think the adventure is over the Doc turns to me with a crazed smile on his face and says to me "Roads? Max, where we're going we don't need roads...just a perfectly groomed dirt track!" and off we went on one final journey.

The time to once again swing a leg over my beloved YZ 125 has finally arrived. It's been a long, slightly stressful and seemingly never ending road. But we are finally here. Six episodes, four months and countless hours in the workshop later our Back to the Future machine is at long last ready to ride. To say I was excited would be an understatement. I was like a kid at Christmas, a dog with a bone, a monkey with a peanut machine.

We travelled down to Essex to visit the perfectly prepared Milk Run motocross track in order to take our all new YZ 125 on its maiden voyage.

Our collective breath was held as the very first lap on board the Back to the Future YZ 125 began. Roland Shaw was on hand as our factory mechanic for the day to ensure that everything on the mechanical and technical side of things went smoothly. As it turned out Roland had a pretty relaxed day – the bike ran perfectly.

Even during the first session in which I had to run the bike in and take it easy I could immediately feel the improvements that we've made. I could just tell that she had something extra, a little more oomph. Even at the low speeds I was going to run it in I could tell that she wanted, nay, that she needed to be ridden properly-hard and at speed.

I've always said it and this bike only reaffirms my opinion further. The Yamaha YZ 125 may well be the best handling dirt bike there is. With

the suspension now fully serviced courtesy of Shocktech our 125 handles like an absolute dream at all times. I'm also a big fan of the Windham Bend Pro Taper bars. They really suited my body position and riding style.

I felt as though I was firmly planted on the bike at all times, this made manoeuvring the corners and bends oh so easy and oh so fun. I felt comfortable enough to really try and lay it flat and push the limits of both front and rear end grip. I definitely feel that my corner speed hasn't been as good as this in a long time and that's all down to the superior handling, feeling and body position that the YZ provides.

Once Roland finally gave me the all clear and threw the thumbs up to say that the bike was properly run in, I could finally experience the true might and power of our new machine...and my god what an improvement!

In comparison to other 125s that I've ridden in recent years the power delivery we have here is much different. Our YZ 125 is much smoother off



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Strip and rebuild

Apico

Pro Taper Contour Windham Bend bars
Aluminium throttle body and bearing
Pro Taper pillow top grips
270mm oversized front disc
Rear disc
Pro Bite foot pegs
Sprocket cover (blue)
Gear lever (blue)
Rear Brake pedal (blue)
Front + Rear reservoir cover (blue)
Sprocket (blue)
Regina chain
Axel blocks (blue)
Boyesen Clutch cover
Boyesen Supercooler
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Magura hydraulic clutch system
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Full suspension service

CI Sport

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Graphics design and print

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the bottom, allowing for far more controlled and precise corner execution and exiting. But it's once you click up through the gears after exiting the turns that she really hooks up. The mid-top end performance is damn right astounding! I've never had the front wheel popping up so much. It was so frickin' fun!

I've never been much of a wheelie boy but this 125 makes me seem like a true wheelie poppin' pro – just check out all videos for proof – and this is due to the tuning done in Roland's workshop and that HGS exhaust system we've got installed. I was so, so impressed with the engine performance of our new machine.

The aim of this project has always been to update the YZ 125 to rival the modern day KTM and Husky machines. As standard Yamaha say that their 125s throw out about 33/34 BHP – and ours was probably less than that after all the abuse it had gone through over the years – whereas the KTM's and Husky's put down around 40/41. So after all of Roland's hard work, tinkering

with the flux capacitor and what not, could we get a BHP number close to the orange and white? Well when the moment of truth came the BTTF YZ 125 threw out a huge 40 BHP on Roland's dyno! That's a resounding success if you ask me!

I can confidently say that our Back to the Future machine is more than capable of bringing the fight to its modern day rivals – the dyno results alone show that. But it's the on track performance, the unrivalled handling, the mid-range kick, the bottom-end smoothness and the huge smile it provides that seal the deal for me. We have well and truly brought our YZ 125 Back to the Future.

We'd like to say a huge thank you to everyone that has put so much time and effort in to this project as well as to all the companies that have been kind enough to help us out in seeing our dream transform into reality.

We've gone and created one hell of a machine and I genuinely cannot wait to hop onboard and start riding it again. I'm going to be enjoying this BTTF YZ 125 for the rest of my days...





Project

AFTER DIVING IN AT THE DEEP END IN THE MAXXIS MXY2 SERIES IN HIS FIRST YEAR ON A 250, DBR PROJECT PILOT JOE CADWALLADER'S BEEN GIVEN SOME RARE DOWNTIME UNTIL THE SERIOUS BUSINESS OF PRE-SEASON PREP KICKS OFF IN NOVEMBER...

Words by Sean Lawless Photos by Nuno Laranjeira

It's not been the best of months for DBR Project pilot Joe Cadwallader who's made impressive progress on the practice track but has so far struggled to translate this improved speed into results.

With the season pretty much over our DBR Project pilot Joe Cadwallader's finally got the chance to kick back after what's been a full-on first year on a 250F in the Maxxis MXY2 championship.

The final round at Foxhill didn't go completely to plan for the 17-year-old on the RMJ Academy FC 250 Husqvarna UK machine with bad starts proving to be costly after he qualified in 11th.

"Foxhill wasn't very good to be honest," says Joe. "It was very tight and I just couldn't get past anyone. It was really frustrating. It was risky to pass and I couldn't get it done. It wasn't what I was after – I know I'm capable of a lot more and really need to put it together."

With orders from academy boss Richard-Mike Jones to take it easy and do as much – or as little – as he wanted, Joe took some time out before getting back in the saddle in early October.

"I went to Wilden for the first round of the winter championship and won all three races which was a good confidence booster because there were some decent riders there."

"Apart from that I've mostly just been chilling and doing a lot of pushbiking. I've ridden the bike a couple of times but only for fun – messing about really – and it's been good to have some downtime. Last weekend before Wilden I went out with my friends and had a curry and wasn't stressed the next day and rode how I normally do when I'm practising."

Having been drafted into the RMJ Academy at the 11th hour this season, Joe's heading into unknown territory as far as off-season prep is concerned.

"I'm not sure what to expect but apparently it's really hard," he adds. "It's going to be a tough couple of months to make sure I'm where I need to be in January. There are a lot of people moving up in my group – there are

seven riders in the top 10 who will be going – and I think even though it's been a hard season it's given me a good platform to build on for my second year on a 250."

Rich-Mike's still keeping an eye on Joe but he's taking a distinctly hands-off approach until the serious business of winter training begins.

"Joe's on downtime at the moment," he says. "I know he's still riding his bike a bit but until the start of November his programme is to take it easy. If he fancies riding his motocross bike then he can go and ride it, if he doesn't then I'm not expecting him to. Essentially he's got to not overdo it."

"His programme is to basically do what he wants as long as he keeps fit. The winter training with me is going to be super-intense for him so the less he talks to me over the next few weeks the better because he's going to be fed up of me by January."

"That's what I say to all my riders – 'go and have some fun' – which is how it is for Pro riders at this time of year before they knuckle down to their winter preparation." The next two months are mapped out for Joe – and they're not going to be easy...

"At the start of November we'll do a full physical test on him at Liverpool John Moores University which will involve checking his blood markers," adds Rich-Mike. "Then, basically, we'll just focus on that and bike technique through until Christmas."

"This year he joined me in March so he missed the pre-season training so this time he's going to get pushed pretty hard on all sides. If everything goes to plan he'll have a little bit of time off between Christmas and the New Year and then we'll be going away to either Spain or Italy or France and be hard at it again."

"We'll still be using LJMU again for all the testing and the science but we'll be doing the physical training in Wilmslow at Harris and Ross."

That's your lot as far as DBR's Project is concerned for 2016 but we're planning on catching up with him in the New Year so stay tuned...

DEFENDING

BUT NOT

DEFENDING

Romain Febvre may have fallen foul of the old saying that 'it's much easier to win a world title than defend one' but having come to terms with what 2016 had to offer he's now looking ahead and has world title #2 firmly in his sights . . .

Words by Future7Media Photos by Ray Archer





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2 015 FIM MXGP World Champion Romain Febvre has proved time and again he knows how to handle pressure. Wrapping up a sensational rookie 450 season with his first world championship title, last year's outsider was very much the rider all others were gunning for headed into this year's series.

Not fazed by the fact he was the man with a target on his back, the Monster Energy Yamaha Factory MXGP rider showed up to the first round of the 2016 season stronger than he's possibly ever been.

Kicking off the 2016 season with a runner-up result in Qatar, two back-to-back victories in Suphan Buri and Valkenswaard signalled that Romain meant business. Only twice finishing outside the top three in the first 10 GPs things were looking good for the Frenchman until disaster struck at Matterley Basin.

Victim of another rider's mistake, Romain was left with a concussion and also the hard-to-bear realisation that his chances of a second title had gone up in smoke...

DBR: It's often said that defending a title is harder than winning one in the first place. What's your take on that?

RF: "No, I wouldn't say it was harder. I believe nothing is more difficult than getting your first world championship. For me winning the 2015 MXGP title meant a lot. It was a proof that I was doing things right. It gave me confidence in my schedule and motivation to keep working to perfect the little details. As a matter of fact, I think I was probably better prepared to battle for the 2016 title when the gate dropped in Qatar this February."

DBR: If winning GPs in 2015 was a triumph, it was somehow expected from you in 2016. How did you cope with this extra pressure?

RF: "Honestly, from my side I didn't feel any extra pressure in 2016. Of course I was a world champion and everyone kept saying that defending the title would be even harder but

that's not the way I saw it. Until you win your first title you can't know if it's even possible. It's the same with every big achievement in your life that takes years to come true. Once you get there for the first time, nothing is really stopping you to make it again and again."

DBR: Your team must have had high hopes for 2016 – any pressure from them?

RF: "I'm really lucky that everyone within my team has the experience and knowledge to handle any kind of situation. From their side there was absolutely no pressure to defend the title. I might be a part of the team for only a year and a half, >>





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but I already feel like they're my family. Of course we all want to win races, but the most important thing is to stay focused on our goals. Things didn't work out for us in 2016 but we all know the results will come if we keep working hard."

DBR: After such a physically and mentally draining season, what does a rider looking to retain the world title he just lost do for the next three months?

RF: "Other than spending more time home and not racing, there won't be many more changes I guess. I never really opt to stay away from the bike for very long. I've tried it in the past and it never really worked. Officially, I'll wrap up the season racing two supercross events – the first one in Arnhem at the end of October and the second in Bercy in November. After Bercy I will take almost a month off and then start preparing again for the coming season."

DBR: What's the best way to switch off in the off-season? Any plans to hit any exotic holiday destinations?

RF: "No, nothing is planned. To be honest leaving home to go on holidays is something we're not looking forward to. Our plan with Megan [Romain's girlfriend] is to stay home and try to get back to our normal lives. We tried that last year and it worked pretty well. Once the MXGP season starts we hardly spend more than two days per week at home, sometimes less. We do so much travelling during the season that getting another flight or booking another hotel is not the best idea."



DBR: How important is to spend quality time with friends and family during winter?

RF: "It's always nice to spend time with family and friends in winter but it's a lot better when you had a great season. It's not that my season wasn't good... it's just that I struggled with injuries and that makes everything harder. After all that happened this year, it gives me extra motivation to continue working for 2017."

DBR: Is the off-season a good chance to let your body recover from a demanding, injury-filled season?

RF: "It was a tough season but I'm already feeling 100 per cent with my body. It's really good that I managed to put all the injuries behind. I guess mentally that's one of my strong points. The way I see it if you think a lot about what happened in the past, you won't let your mind focus on the future. After my crash in England it was also important that I gave my body time to recover. I stayed away from the bike for almost a month and when I got back I took things one step at a time. Physically I'm fine now so I'll just keep doing what I do until the next season starts."

DBR: Looking back at the 2016 MXGP series what would you say were your best and worst moments?

RF: "One of my best weekends of the season was during the French GP in Saint Jean d'Angely in June. It's always so great to win a GP in >>>

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front of my home crowd and I was really happy I did that for the second year in a row. At that moment my gap to Gajser was just 24 points.

"Unfortunately, two weeks later I experienced what was without doubt my lowest moment of the season, crashing out of the GP in Matterley Basin. It's not just the injury and that I was forced to miss the following two GPs. Up until that moment everything was going more or less according to plan. I was battling for GP wins every time out and I was still in the battle for the championship."

DBR: Seeing your chances for the title disappear in the blink of an eye, how did

that affect you psychologically?

RF: "To be honest I was really disappointed. I don't remember lots of things from the crash in Matterley Basin. It all happened fast and I lost consciousness after that. As soon as I woke up in the hospital and realised I wouldn't be able to ride anytime soon, I knew the championship was gone. It was hard to accept. A good thing with this crash is that it wasn't my fault. It was nobody's fault actually, so I realised there was no point feeling guilty. Luckily I got over it pretty quickly so I could focus on my recovery. Due to some nerve damage I had some trouble with the vision on my right eye and doctors didn't know when it'd be okay. So I waited a whole

month and took it easy before coming back."

DBR: Now that you have the time to do so, are there any points you'd like to work on and improve in order to come back stronger in 2017?

RF: "We struggled with the starts in 2016. It was one of our weakest points and we need to improve on that for the coming season. In terms of bike development we've already started trying different solutions since the last few GPs. Before leaving for the US we did some testing with the team and improved a lot on various aspects of the bike. We'll make the most of the time we have this winter to continue >>



TEAM TALK!

A word with Monster Energy Yamaha Factory MXGP team boss — Massimo Raspanti

"We knew it'd be harder for Romain to defend his title this year. After an incredible 2015 season there was extra pressure to deliver. I'm sure it'd be the same for everybody in his shoes."

"During the last three years there are so many good riders in MXGP that it gets harder to make a difference. Before his injury Romain was 24 points behind Gajser and well in contention for the title. What happened in Matterley Basin was bad luck. Otherwise things would've been a lot different."

"As a motocross athlete Romain is incredibly intelligent. He knows exactly where his limits are and how much he should push. Even last year when people saw him as the outsider, he was always out there to win."

"Probably one of Romain's greatest advantages is that he never worries about others. If he's feeling comfortable on the bike, it makes no difference what competitors do."

"We're more than ready to take back the MXGP title. We've started testing bits and making improvements on the bike during the last few GPs of 2016. As for Romain, his levels of work and commitment are unquestionable. With nothing to prove anymore it'll be hard for others to beat him."



moving forward with my team. As for myself, I know what needs to be done and I'm not planning to make any changes. Last winter I did everything that I needed to do and I'm going to do the same again now."

DBR: With Herlings coming to MXGP and Gajser set to defend his title, it seems 2017 will be a very competitive season!

RF: "I've never been one looking around at what others do or say. I know that staying focused on my plans and work hard is the best I can do. I did that last year and I'm going to do it again for 2017. People around me might say that staying focused on my own affairs is my strength but I don't really know what to say about that. I really don't know and I have no interest in knowing what others do."

DBR: What are the chances of 2017 being Romain Febvre's best yet?

RF: "I'm happy a tough season is over and we can focus on the next one. Through the good times and the bad I'm learning and improving bits of my preparation and my attitude towards racing. But overall, from my side I don't feel there will be lots of changes for 2017. I know the level of commitment and sacrifice needed to win races and become a world champion. But it's not just a question of training or preparation. You also need some luck to have everything working on your side."

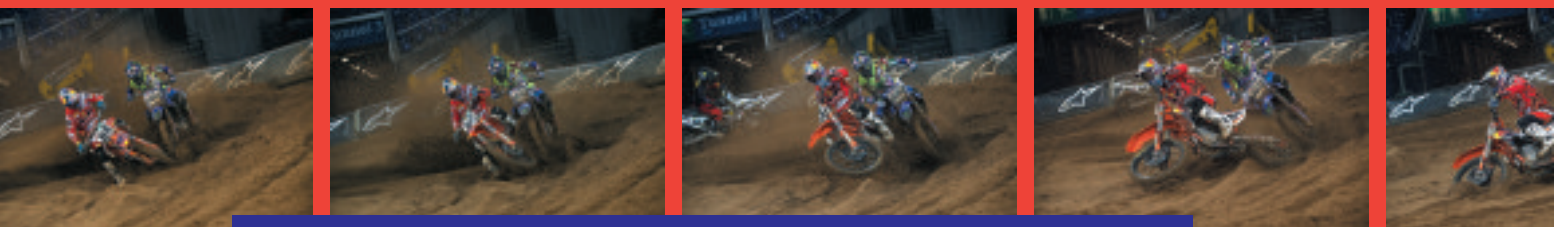
TEAM TACTICS!

Romain's secrets to MXoN glory . . .

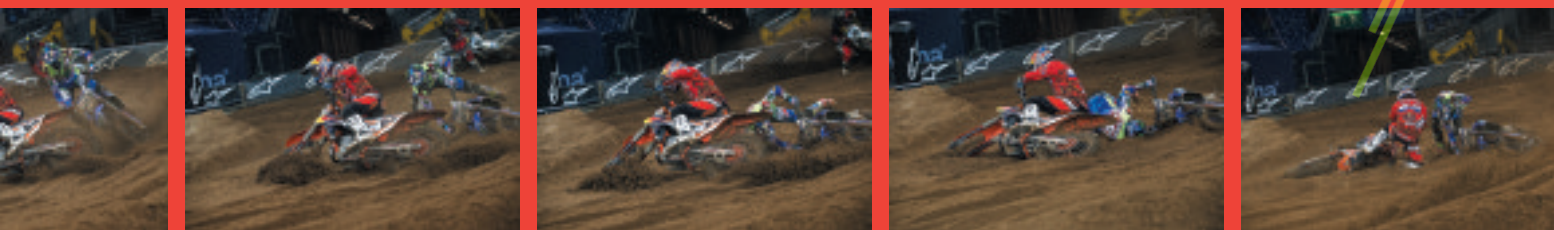
Wrapping up the season with fourth in the MXGP championship standings, Romain came back swinging at the Motocross of Nations. Claiming a convincing moto one victory he helped Team France secure the coveted MXoN title for the third consecutive year. But what changed during the weekend in Maggiora?

"There were no big changes, just a couple of details that came together during the weekend at the Nations. The MXoN is a very different race. Even if we're battling with Gautier Paulin during the season we forget everything at the Nations and work together as a team. We always have a very strong connection within the French team and I think this has always been one of our strongest points. We want to win for France and that makes everything a bit different."

"For the MXoN we also opted with my team to return to our basic 2016 engine configuration on my YZ450FM. Since it was mathematically impossible for me to win the title, during the last three GPs in Assen and the US we started testing parts and solutions to better prepare ourselves for 2017. But for the Nations I raced the engine spec I was a lot more familiar with."



Romain Febvre has already clashed with Jeffrey Herlings on a 450 with gravity beating both of them in the end...





MXA

Tommy Searle talks exclusively to DBR ahead of his full-throttle title assault on the Arenacross series...

Words by **Sutty** Photos by **Nuno Laranjeira**

Since turning pro at the age of 15, Tommy Searle has pretty much lived his whole life in the limelight. Almost 12 years on and the now 27-year-old Brit hasn't quite delivered what we initially hoped for in terms of world titles although his career has still been a highly successful one.

A quick scout through the archives reveals that Tommy has won 14 MX2 GPs, 3 x FIM silver medals, 1 x FIM bronze medal, an individual class victory at the MXoN, multiple podiums in various national championships and most recently of all the 2016 MX1 British Championship – almost unbelievably his first ever major pro title.

When I arranged to sit down with Tommy at the Stoneleigh

show it was only six weeks after that championship had been secured. It was also literally only a couple of days until the DRT Kawasaki rider started prepping for 2017 – the physical demands an MXGP season puts on its athletes require almost year-round hard work and dedication.

The results of that graft are visibly evident. Even if you had no clue that Tommy Searle was a motocross racer competing at the very highest levels of the sport, you'd instinctively know he was an athlete in prime physical condition. Lean and muscular – but without being too beefy – it's obvious that Searle is in great shape and likes to look after himself, even now, in the depths of the off-season.

But he's far from being all brawn. Take time to talk and it's very apparent there's intelligence in there too. Bright eyed, alert and >>



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consistently honest – although very diplomatic when he needs to be – it's always a pleasure to chat to him. And with recent developments there's plenty to chat about...

Before dragging him off to a quiet corner of the exhibition centre's ridiculously overpriced canteen, I find Tommy perched on a stool at the Arenacross stand doing his ambassador bit for the series he – perhaps surprisingly – has signed up to race in 2017. A casual fan of the championship for the past few years (thanks to his long-term links with series supporters Monster Energy) it now has his full attention – his eyes firmly focussed on the race action that's playing on the huge flat-screen TVs.

"It's never been a thing in my career where I've thought I want to be Arenacross champion," admits Searle almost a little too honestly when I finally drag him away from the on-screen action. "But I think it will be a fun series to be a part of," he adds diplomatically before adding, "I'm really looking forward to racing in it."

Having put all his eggs in the world championship basket on a yearly basis since turning 17 (except for those two injury-hit years in America) it was a bit of a surprise when Tommy signed up for this year's Maxxis and an even bigger one when we heard he was competing in the full Arenacross tour – a series the leading local talent has always seemed a little scared of. So what led to the UK's #1 motocross racer putting his GP preparations on hold to compete in the indoor series?



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MATTERLEY MXON!

Tommy's last chance of a home team victory?

It's not only the Arenacross Tour that promises to deliver an awesome atmosphere for British race fans in 2017 and after hearing that the Motocross of Nations is returning to Matterley Basin Tommy is understandably keen to be involved.

"It's a year away and I'm already really excited about it because everything comes around so quickly. Matterley is an event that I need to be at because the chances are that there's not going to be another British Des Nations during my career. We had it in 2006 – which was my first Des Nations – and then the last time was 2008. I definitely won't be doing it in another nine years!

"Potentially it's going to be the best motocross event there's ever been. You've got Steve Dixon – who's a bit of a nut job – promoting it and he's looking to make everything better and is gonna do stuff that nobody has ever done before. I think he'll pull it off too and I really want to be a part of it when he does."

ATTACK!

"When Matt [Bates – series promoter] and Kawasaki came to me and asked if I wanted to do it, I initially said 'yeah' to doing the first few rounds. They wanted me to do the full series though and they put a really good proposal together to make that happen. I'd really enjoyed the SMX Cup when I raced in that so after a bit of thought I decided to commit to the full tour.

"The winter is such a long old period of time spent just training and riding," he explains. "So racing Arenacross is going to break it up for me and give me something to really look forward to on the weekends.

"It won't be hard on my body as the short, sharp races mean I'm probably only going to be on the track for about 15 minutes a night and with the intensity of the racing and the number of starts – we're gonna be doing three starts a night and they're so important in Arenacross – it's going to really help me prepare for Qatar.

"The main thing though is it'll give me and Kawasaki a lot of good coverage. The events are really good and they always have a great atmosphere – they're basically a great night out for the family and it will be good for kids to see >>







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me racing the series. I like where Arenacross is headed and I'm happy to be a part of it."

No doubt a lot of that 'happiness' stems from the financial package offered by Kawasaki and tour promoters AS Live but more importantly than that Tommy also sees it as a way to better himself as a rider and raise his game ahead of the MXGP season opener.

"If you look at the riders that are winning GPs you'll see that they aren't pretty on a bike – they attack and are wild! It's not that their style is bad because they're good riders and they obviously know what they're doing. But they're hanging it out for the full 40 minutes, they make mistakes but they don't care and they push and they push. That's what it takes to win on a 450 at the moment and that's what I need to do – I've got to push hard and keep my intensity up. Arenacross will be great for that."

As well as the financial gains and increase in intensity, there's also a very strong possibility that Tommy will see an upturn in his fan base over the duration of the tour. >>

SURPRISE SURPRISE!

Three things you probably didn't know about Tommy Searle

"DAD HAD NO CLUE ABOUT RACING"

"My dad never raced a motorbike himself so could offer no guidance to me when I started out. We did it as a family because we enjoyed it but he was just winging it. People used to look at me and say 'he's fast but his bike's absolutely hanging'. I probably had the worst bikes in the pits, not through lack of effort because dad would do everything he could but he just didn't know what he was doing. He would spend money on an engine and then try tinkering with it and make it worse than a standard one."

"MENTAL ATTITUDE IS REALLY IMPORTANT!"

Believing in yourself is as important as fitness and bike skills and there have been times through the years where I have seen a mental coach because I felt that it was something that I needed to do."

"I WANT TO STAY IN MOTOCROSS WHEN I STOP RACING"

"I'd like to work with young riders because I enjoy training and helping fast riders. I know what it takes to win and I do have a lot of experience. It would be nice to have an academy where I can show British kids what it takes to win at world level. At the minute I think they're lacking something and you don't see anyone coming up that is just smashing it and strong with their heart in it."

"I've done it and I know what it takes. I had good guidance and at some point in my career I'd like to take the next group to the top. I was lucky I had good guidance with Jamie who took me on because he obviously saw some potential – he hand picked me and I didn't go to him. It'll be nice for me to do the same – but different – with someone else."



Tommy was happy to finally clinch a British Championship crown



TITLE TOPPER!

Tommy talks about finally clinching the British Championship...

"I started riding the Maxxis as a 15-year-old riding for Molson Kawasaki. I was fifth the first year and then I missed taking the title by two points to Carl Nunn the next – I was devastated. I then moved to factory KTM for 2007 and just missed out on it again – this time to Mike Brown.

"The next year my focus was on the world championship and KTM wanted me to concentrate on that. After that I never did a full season in the UK again – I went to America, then I rode for a French team who had no interest in doing the British Championship. I did do some one-off rounds and I think I won every one of those that I did other than one at FatCat when I crashed at the start.

"I came back this year though and I won it. When I was driving to Lyng for round one with Ed and my girlfriend I said I was going to win and that I didn't care if someone wanted to race me that day because I was going for it. That's exactly what I did and I came away with two wins and enjoyed the day – I felt like I rode the best I had in years.

"There were lots of ups and downs through the year but I stayed as consistent as I could. It came down to two points in the end which served as a reminder that every point counts so I'm glad I pushed on through the tough rounds when I was riding injured.

"It wasn't easy. I was nervous coming into the last round but not because I needed to win this British Championship but more because I'd put so much into it throughout the year and to lose out would have been a total waste – I put my best effort in and it was my time to win it. It was really nice to win it and it was good for my confidence too."



It's this attacking style that has helped make Tommy a favourite with race fans

With the championship set to fill arenas in Manchester, Glasgow, Birmingham, Belfast, Sheffield and London the opportunity to wow a new audience is huge.

"I think if I can be winning races – which is my plan – then the atmosphere in the arenas will be amazing. If I'm coming into the final round with a chance of being champion then it'll be off the hook – even last year when Chatfield won in London they geed it up so much. It was mad, y'know? Even just watching the video back was amazing..."

"I know it won't be easy with all three former champs signed up but I'll be giving it my best shot. Some of the French guys are really quick and they seem to concentrate on indoor racing, they do it week in week out and they'll be at the top of their game. There's no-one in particular I'm worried about but I know they'll be fast. I'll give it my best shot and try to bring the title home for the British fans..."

Searle is no stranger to indoor racing having competed in several AMA Supercross rounds as well as Euro events like Bercy in the past













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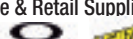
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BIG!

RAGE CATCHES UP WITH GEORGE GRIGG-PETTITT
- A BIG LAD WITH A HUGE FUTURE...

As a 14-year-old back in 2015, George Grigg-Pettitt entered the record books as one of the youngest ever heat winners in ACU Youth Open class history – ending last year's campaign in championship fourth. Without doubt that was merit worthy enough at such a raw age and winning the title this year at 15 caps what has been an unconventional but totally memorable youth career.

It also makes GGP one of the youngest ever Open class champions. He enters the pro ranks next year and typical of GGP he intends skipping over the MX2 class, going straight into MX1. Having just signed on the dotted line for East Anglia based dealership Lings Honda it's a 450 next for George.

Almost since day one of his racing career GGP has stood out as a big unit – the physical giant of his age group – which has meant having to shift

up early through every rank. Because of his size he didn't have any real competitive option and his path through the youth ranks was under the radar in some seasons. Make no mistake though – GGP is up there with the very best of the previous Open class champions.

As a tribute to George – his dedication, commitment and skill and also the happy smiley way he goes about business – let's have a little look back at his career highs.

I first stumbled across George in 2010 – back then he was under the Team Stebbings race awning campaigning a KX65 and getting solid results at national level in the Junior class. Teaming up next with Chris Mills and Tom Grimshaw – forming Team Powerband Racing – it was interesting to note that give a month or two all three guys are the same age.

And that was only of special interest because GGP was already racing in a higher class.

That year, 2012, Tom and Chris knocked spots off each other for the 65cc crowns while George spent the season impressively chucking his weight around in the SW85s. Swiftly moving up to the BW class in 2013, GGP excelled again for his age – ending the racing year as a 12 year old on the EYC podium and runner-up at the Weston Beach Race.

We caught up with George at the time. "Leading the opening three laps was the best feeling ever and if I hadn't been racing with a standard tank and had stop to clean out the carb on lap four I could have won it."

If you're wondering just how big a unit GGP was at the time – he weighed in at an impressive 66KGs, was 1.7m tall and sporting a size 10 boot.

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GGP manhandles his BW85



Topping the BYN podium at Cusses Gorse



On his SW85 GGP was a tough competitor



Even on a 65 GGP was very tall



George will be trading in his 250 for a 450 race machine in 2017!



Leaving 2013 behind, the original plan was to take on Europe in 2014 on a special big frame 85 – another plan ultimately scuppered as George continued to grow skywards. A special ACU dispensation to ride in the 125s in 2014 offered an alternative route and once again George made an impressive impact.

Under the guidance of trainer Gary Linge, DRF Powerband team-mate Jordan Eccles was the runaway champion that year. GGP improved rapidly all through the season and to his credit (as a 13 year old) racked up seven individual second place results, then topped all with a runner-up finish on the podium at the season finale.

In 2015 – George's first term on a 250F – he actually nailed two BYN Open class wins in what was a quite amazing run of consistency finishing

every race in the top five. He ended that season a very close championship fourth behind Robbie Dowson as Jordan Eccles wrestled the title from Luke Smith.

Rock solid consistency – nothing worse than some fourth place finishes in the final count up – with just two heat wins was the record for 2016 and up against the likes of Alexander Brown, GGP needed to be at his consistent best to stay in the hunt.

At the Cusses Gorse season closer it was still all to play for and it was unlucky for Brown that he had a weekend to forget. That said, GGP had a couple of days he will remember forever. All the very best of luck in the Pro ranks GGP – it's been a real pleasure watching the show so far.

TRAINER TALK!

A quick word with LTA's Gary Linge...

"Jumping up the classes early left George always chasing the more experienced riders and never really tasting what it was like to win. The advantage was him gaining a lot of experience on the bigger bikes, having to work hard and learn a lot from the other racers, maturing early and perfecting his skills. This year he has looked really solid, his skill and technique have become very natural and fluent on the bike, all of the hard work George and his team have put in over the years has been remarkable. He's now ready for the next challenge – mixing it up with the Pro class."

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With the ACU lowering the age limit in the 125cc youth smoker class it's now possible to enter the fray at just 13 years of age. From promoters, riders and parents alike, the rule change has been widely applauded. It's a change which could well revitalise the class – especially at National level.

There can be little doubt that a competitive wide line of 125s is a sight, sound and spectacle that's up there with the very best. That said, in recent years, the various National level championships have all suffered from a lack of bums on seats although the biggest of all – the British Youth Nationals – has given us a string of quality champions since the class was reintroduced in 2012.

With the addition of the 13-year-old newbies – generally the taller/heavier guys who are realistically at a disadvantage on an 85 – the 125s should blossom in 2017 although the BW85 class could lose some title candidates with the likes of Preston Williams and Joel Rizzi already declared as 125cc runners for next years Nationals.

As one of the up and coming talents – and one sure to figure in the next couple of seasons – Rage has ripped Preston in this month's spotlight...

Rage: Before we get on to your thoughts on the 125s – give us a brief rundown on your career so far.

PW: "I started racing in 2009 on a KTM 50 but that only lasted briefly as I moved up to the Juniors on a Kawasaki in 2010 aged seven. In my first season on the 65 I got lapped a lot but the following year I took championship sixth at the BYNs and third in the Arenacross 65s.

"Moving up to SW85 I stuck with the KX greenie doing all the major nationals, eventually scoring

several podium finishes at the BYN and MX Nationals with a best of third again at Arenacross.

"2015 on the Husky was my best SW year claiming series eighth at BYN and fourth in the MX Nationals. In 2016, my only year on the Big Wheel bike I was pleased to get podium results in the BYNs, MX Nationals and Arenacross."

Rage: It's obvious as one of the taller brigade you've had to move up early all through your career – what's been the stand out highs and lows?

PW: "Highs – winning at Arenacross is pretty cool when you go up on the podium with all the lights, music and huge crowd cheering you on. Lows – breaking my arm badly at Arenacross this year. I had to take three months off so that kind of blew my 2016 season before it started."

Rage: Moving to the here and now and the 125. You enjoyed a really promising debut show at the BYN Cusses Gorse finale running inside and around the top 10. What are your initial thoughts on the 125 and how are your preparations going for the 2017 Nationals?

PW: "The 125 is awesome and I felt good on it straight away. In fact I've surprised myself and my dad how up to speed I am already on the stock bike. That said, I've got to get used to slowing down for some jumps – the ones where I was tapped on the 85, the 125 sails over. I've watched a few landing going the other way already..."

"This will be my first year of not competing in the Arenacross championship and I plan to get outdoors as much as possible – particularly focussing on upping my sand game. I've started training with Justin Morris and will be out with him a lot over the winter in preparation for next season.

"I'll be competing in the British Youth National 125s and MX Nationals – I'm also hoping for a wildcard run in some EMX125 rounds."

Rage: Looking back at 2016 what was your best meeting and why?

PW: "Duns with the MX Nationals was sick. One race in particular really stands out with three of us together on the last corner racing to the chequers. That was big fun. Also at that meeting, feeling fitter and stronger following my injury, I was able to push more – I got fourth overall."

Rage: As we mentioned before, having moved up early most of your racing career are you looking for an extended run on the 125 or do you see it as another bridge to an early move onto 250F?

PW: "The plan is definitely 125 in the UK for 2017 and then move up to EMX125 for 2018 – then see from there. I did ride the 2017 Husky 250F and 125 back-to-back a few weeks ago. The 250 gets so much traction but the 125 is just so rewarding and tons of fun – it's unreal when you get it right!"

Rage: Team Williams it's your shout. Take it away mum, dad and Preston.

M+DW: "We would like to say a massive well done to Preston for all he has achieved so far and we are so proud of how he has overcome his horrific injury sustained at Arenacross with a mature head – way above his years."

PW: "I'd like to thank the following for all their help and support – Dave Edwards and Husqvarna UK, MI Construction, Kingswood, Malcolm Rathmell Sport, MJW, Shocktech, Whites Transport Services, Husky Sport, O'Neal clothing, JMMX, Rip n' Roll and mum, dad and my grandparents."

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